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[THE OMINOUS FOOTSTEPS.]

THE BARONET'S SON;

OR,

LOVE AND HATE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Winifred Wynne," "One Sparkle of Gold," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XVI.

Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse; and with me
The girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glads and bower,
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle or restrain.
She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glees, bounds o'er the lawn,
And up the mountain springs.

"GLADYS, my fair betrothed, I am come at last, to receive my answer, and I can scarcely doubt what it will be," said Mr. Brooke Rawleigh, the day after another new year had dawned on the earth.

"May I ask why you are so confident?" returned Gladys, sharply, for her spirit was roused by the triumphant smile and tone of her mature lover. "Unless, indeed, it is that you expect me to repeat the refusal that I wished to give months since," she added, proudly.

"By no means. I believe you know me better, and can trust me more entirely than you did then," he answered, coolly. "I know perfectly well that I am not a lover to your taste, but that is perfectly distinct from a husband, who fills a very different position. I can assure you, fair Gladys,"

"Perhaps," she returned, more gently. "And, I daresay, I am very wrong and ungrateful to resent what I believe you mean kindly and well. But I dare not deceive you in so important a manner. I trust, and I do esteem you more than I did six months ago, but I have no love—none—such as I ought to

feel, and it would only be from other motives that I could ever dream of—of consenting to your wish and my father's."

"I understand; you wish for freedom, independence, and money—such as I can give you," he replied, carelessly.

"No, no; I have no such desire," she said, eagerly. "It is to save one only—a dear brother, that I would sacrifice my whole life and happiness if it were necessary; and that seems impossible."

"Why?" was the brief demand. "Why?"

"Because I have tried—in vain. My father will not even hear of such a condition, and I do not think it would be fair to you, Mr. Rawleigh, even if he did, unless you knew and consented also. But that is over—all over, and I dare not venture on what I am sure would be an unblest as well as a loveless life for both."

There was a grave, even sad, smile, but no tinge of anger or disapproval on the strong features of her suitor, as he replied:

"Gladys, I can trust a true-hearted girl, and a good and affectionate sister, with my whole future happiness, without a fear or doubt. Will you let me speak to you as if I were another brother, instead of a lover, and will you listen candidly and impartially to what I have to say?"

"Yes, I will. You are very good and kind," she said, tearfully; "and I have no friends near me—none to advise or sympathize with me in my perplexity."

"Very well. Then I would put the whole case before you, Gladys, and then you can decide. Your father hates your brother for an unexplained cause. That is patent to all the country round. There is no hope of his relenting—none—as you have discovered; and though it is doubtful that he can alienate the succession to his estates; yet it may be long years ere they will come to him—or, mark me, Gladys, he may be a victim to folly and dissipation and vice ere that period arrives."

The girl started painfully.

"Have you heard? Do you know this?" she

said, eagerly. "Oh, Mr. Rawleigh, be true—be candid! Do not in any way deceive me?"

"I will not, so help me Heaven!" he answered as he saw her pained eyes and whitening cheeks. "I have inquired into the truth, and I have heard that your brother has been tempted, as many a young man beside has been, to plunge into more of the wild excitement of London than is safe for him. And what I would say is this: If you will give me the right and the motive to befriend him I will do my utmost for your sake, Gladys. I do not pretend that I will waste my money in vice and extravagance, but I will be as true and patient as a father and brother combined can be in saving and befriending him till he needs nothing from me—and to you, Gladys, I will be, to the best of my ability, such a husband as will win your love and confidence, though, perhaps, not as a younger and attractive man might do. Now I have told you all. It is for you to decide. I do love you, Gladys, far more than when I chose you for your beauty and grace, because I have found in you truth and honour and a high-minded unselfishness. Can you accept what I have to offer?"

The girl had sat there with downcast eyes, and her clasped hands over her heart, as if she was trying to still rebellious throbbings and to think calmly and rationally of her duty.

She tried to realize what would be her feelings if she were to refuse this noble-minded man's offer, and the sole chance of saving and befriending the brother to whom she was so romantically devoted. She would remain in a house where she was by no means a favourite or cherished child; she would be the very victim of her father's angry mortification and of Wenna's calm, cynical sarcasm; and Oscar—ah, Oscar would perhaps appeal to her in vain or else sink in hopeless and fatal dissipation and hopeless degradation, that would bring a malediction on her for the refusal to accept the help so generously proffered.

There was still a romantic, vague feeling in the very depths of her heart that made the sacrifice a

dreary and a painful one; but still that was but a vision, a phantom idea, a shadowy panting for unknown happiness that should be checked and conquered ruthlessly and for ever.

It might be that she was actuated even in her utmost generosity by the very alarm that some foolish or selfish motive actuated her, or, on the other hand, the weight of influence hung too strongly on the suitor's side.

It was a graceful and touching sight when she at length raised her eyes to his with a childlike and frank-hearted expression that might well have won the confidence of the most suspicious and distrustful.

"You know all—you must think—you must not doubt or blame me," she said, "if I am not all that you desire or expect. I am afraid you may repent, that you may think you have given all and received nothing from me."

A bright happiness beamed over the strong features of the suitor.

"No," he said, "no; you need fear nothing, sweet Gladys; you are giving me what can never be repaid—youth and beauty and a true heart. And so long as you do not deceive me, Gladys, I will never ask or expect more than you freely and spontaneously can give. Will this satisfy your scruples?"

It well might do so.

It well might set at rest any phantoms of fear that had agitated the young girl's breast.

And she knew that it was true, and that it was incumbent on her to be happy and grateful for the noble and worshipping love she had inspired.

But she did not—she could not give herself up to such reasonable joy.

She rather felt as if she had taken a yoke on herself of duties that she would find it irksome to fulfil.

She had an uneasy presentiment of evil, a sense of constraint that could never altogether consist with happiness and love.

"Perfect love casteth out fear," is an inspired saying that meets again and again with a response in the human heart, and more especially when such love is inspired, and yielded as a return.

"You are right. I cannot doubt or hesitate. I had rather trust you than any human being I know," she replied. "For Oscar's sake I am most grateful, and for myself I could freely in your honour and kindness."

He bent down and kissed her fair brow and then for a brief moment pressed his lips to hers in a reverent and calm rather than a passionate caress.

"May Heaven bless the bond," he returned. "And, my Gladys, as a first cement of our mutual hopes and intentions, I will give you this to forward to your brother. It will save him from any urgent necessities, and then we will see after what more permanent service we may be to him."

He placed a banknote for a hundred pounds in her hand as he spoke and there was a strange pensiveness in his whole expression as he once more clasped her hand in his as a last farewell.

"Heaven grant we may be spared to each other for many a long year, Gladys," he went on. "And, in any case, I shall take care that you shall not suffer by any accident to myself when once your future is entrusted to my keeping. Now, farewell. I shall think well over the most eligible arrangements, and return in a day or so, to propose my plans to Sir Lewis."

It was over—he had gone, and Gladys remained in her apartment alone and in deep speculation and perhaps anxious thought.

It was a solemn compact she had undertaken, and her young and conscientious heart was perhaps at once overburdened by the responsibility she had incurred.

Or was it a conviction that she could never be happy as the wife of Brooke Rawleigh, or a yet more vague and unconscious sense of evil and sorrow in the future that oppressed and chained her to the spot where he had left her in the full and excited anticipation of an untied and a fickle fortune? It might be one or all of these fears and difficulties that clouded the prospect before her, and made her start as if galvanised when the sound of the dressing-bell roused her from her deep and prolonged reverie.

The next day and the next passed away, and still Mr. Rawleigh did not appear, and Gladys began to feel the vague blank that a complete failure of some cherished excitement brings to the mind, more especially in youth and hopefulness.

But on the third a brief note arrived with a notice of his expected advent.

"I shall be with you soon after luncheon, my dear girl," it ran. "Perhaps you will allow me to remain till after dinner."

Sir Lewis was delighted and gracious.

"I hope and believe you have appeared all I could desire to Mr. Rawleigh," he observed to his daughter. "There is a pleasing and significant freedom in the note that I fully appreciate. You are proving yourself a sensible girl, Gladys, and you will find that you will not be more tried."

"I believe it, papa," was the girl's fervent but quietly spoken reply.

And there was something in its tone that silenced Sir Lewis Vandeleur's jubilant glee.

The morning went on, the luncheon hour came; the meal was delayed for the arrival of the expected guest.

But Mr. Rawleigh came not.

"Very odd, very inconsiderate! he might at any rate have sent a message," fumed Sir Lewis.

Gladys did not in the least care about the delay since it was in her opinion an subject and capable of explanation.

And to say truth she would not have broken her heart had it been conveyed to her that her suitor had changed his mind and drawn back from the contest for her hand.

Still Sir Lewis's fidget was infectious, and when they at length sat down to luncheon his expression was monotonously wearisome.

"Surely the message must have missed; he would not have been so wanting in common courtesy," he observed, fretfully.

"Really, papa, you are very needlessly disturbed," said the provoked Wenna. "Most likely Mr. Rawleigh was detained unexpectedly, and he might reasonably conclude that there would always be luncheon at Vandeleur Hall which would suffice for him, even were he not absolutely expected. No doubt he will come in time for dinner."

It somewhat silenced Sir Lewis, but still he had evidently some uneasy doubts or else consequential pique at the delay of his guest, and the rest of the afternoon was spent by him in his library, while the girls remained in their own apartment in a provoking state of suspense and expectation.

"It is certainly rather a cool thing of Mr. Rawleigh, though I wanted to silence papa's fussy indignation," observed Wenna, raising her eyes from her book some time after when the dusk of a January afternoon was closing in. "He should by this time have turned up or else dispatched a message, as papa says. You must teach him better manners when you are Mrs. Brooke," she went on, shrugging her shoulders. "I expect he will need a good deal of tamping before you get him into mould, Gladys."

"He will want little schooling in the most important qualities of life, Wenna," replied the girl, coldly. "And if ever I am his wife I shall certainly be very sorry to take on myself such an unbecoming character as a teacher of etiquette."

"It is very troublesome certainly," returned Wenna, in most inextinguishable sarcasm; "only I should not like to bludge for my husband about every other day when I went into society, as I suppose you mean to do. However, I shall never be tried, for I would as soon marry a dancing master as a clerk, and papa dare not even propose it to me."

It was a sharp sting, and all the more so from its truth.

Gladys knew pretty well that Sir Lewis took his whole thoughts and plans of leaving every advantage for his darling, and that no marriage would be deemed sufficiently brilliant for her that did not combine every requisite of rank and money and personal gifts that the caprice of the fastidious Wenna could demand.

So she quietly returned to her book, and closed the dialogue by a summons for lights to be brought.

There was an unusual delay in the response, and Gladys was about to ring the bell a second time when a bustle in the hall and some exclamations that were far too loud for the well-schooled household at Vandeleur Hall arrested the purpose.

She opened the door and listened with strained ears that would assuredly have caught the faintest sound, but for the first few moments there was a hushed silence that had something even more terrible in it to the listener.

A whole crowd of ideas and terrors rushed on her mind. Her father—Oscar!—and last, and perhaps with the least sickening calm, her trustful suitor, Brooke Rawleigh— which of them might be the victim? which could be the most likely source of the evident commotion beneath?

It was only a moment, however, though it seemed to the overstrained nerves of the girl to be hours, before she heard hurried though heavy steps ascending the stairs and her own name called in tones that were her father's, but with a strange hoarseness in them which betokened some violent agitation.

Her trembling steps could scarcely support her to the lower landing, where Sir Lewis awaited her, and when she did arrive there she saw at a glance

something had occurred of no common or pleasing import.

"Gladys, my dear," he said, in unvoiced kindness, "I want you to go with me at once, and you must save yourself for perfect calmness or it will be dangerous for others. There is one who has been injured and who is now in, I fear, imminent danger and who longs for your presence. Be quick and I will have the carriage ready as quickly as possible."

"Who is it? Tell me, please!" she gasped. "Is it Oscar?"

"No, no," and a dark shadow came over his face. "It is one who is of far more consequence to you and who less deserved such a fate. It is Mr. Brooke Rawleigh, who was thrown from his horse as he was on his way here and who is lying in a nearly hopeless state. He wants you. Come, be quick," he added, harshly, as if the very repetition of the truth was irritating to his nerves.

Gladys was pale and stunned at the unexpected tidings. It was impossible for any one to hear them unmoved, but still it was urgent on her to maintain her self-possession, and what was more, she was in her heart grateful that the unfortunate victim was not yet dearer and nearer than the worthy but unattractive suitor, for whom she could not cherish any warmer feelings than regard and esteem.

She hurried away, and in less time than even her impatient father expected, she had prepared for the journey, and the two set off on their rapid and melancholy expedition.

Few words were exchanged between them on the road.

Sir Lewis was evidently in profound agitation from some unexplained cause, and Gladys could not but shrink, however brave might be her nature, from the spectacle that awaited her of the wounded and perhaps dying man.

She did not even inquire into the nature of the injuries or the way in which they were sustained. It was enough for her that danger and death hovered over the house she was about to visit, and that much might depend on her calmness and fortitude in the scene that awaited her.

"My master is alive, sir, and sensible; but I fear there is no hope," was the sad answer that the baronet received when he made the first inquiries at the gates of the "Court," and the carriage rolled on in silence more ominous and gloomy than before.

The door was reached, and Gladys was ushered into the library, which bore touching proofs of the taste and the care that seemed almost to have forestalled her wishes in the recent decorations and furniture of the room.

Many little proofs of such remembrance of her tastes met her view, and in her inmost heart she felt a relenting tenderness, as if she would at last have been won by such an unobtrusive and sincere regard for her happiness.

Poor Gladys well nigh felt as if, too late, that she was losing in Brooke Rawleigh her truest if not her only friend.

But it was no time to indulge personal regrets now, and in a few brief seconds she was summoned to the sick-room.

She entered it with noiseless steps and a trembling, throbbing heart that scarcely could be steadied enough for her voice to even whisper the kindly words on her tongue.

But there was nothing to shock her in the outward aspect of the invalid—there were no blood-stained bandages—no manifestation of the injuries he had received.

And yet, as his pallid features met her view, she could not, even in her inexperience, doubt that he was a dying man.

"Gladys, my love," he whispered, "perhaps it is for the best that I am thus taken from you, ere you had risked your young happiness to my keeping."

"No, no!" she moaned. "Do not speak like that, I should have been happy and content if I could not have been all you expected."

He smiled—a sad, sad, feeble smile.

"There was no fear of that. I knew you well before I asked as I did. And, Gladys, dearest, I have done what I could—that I thought right and wise, and the papers—that—that tell it all—are in—"

Gladys stooped her head to his lips to catch the words that suddenly became painfully indistinct. It seemed as if the sudden strength and blaze of life which had flamed up in the expiring frame had suddenly collapsed, and left the sufferer powerless and destitute of vital energies.

Gladys waited in throbbing expectation for the next convulsive effort to pronounce the words that were almost gurgling in his throat—but in vain.

There was a movement of the lips, and unintelligible sounds on the tongue that strove to form them into words.

She could catch only one word here and there, and then they conveyed no meaning to her mind, though they were evidently intended as directions for the place where the documents alluded to would be found.

Her hand was locked so tightly in his that she had no power to draw it from his grasp to summon assistance, and though the death struggle seemed about to begin, and the dark terrors due to over-spread his features, yet still he kept her near to him by sign or look, even when the lips refused longer to perform their office.

He seemed to cling to her in death, as he would have done in life, as his chief hope and support and love.

It was distressing as touching to the maiden, but she roused every nerve to meet the trying crisis. She bent over his pillow, she bent down her lips to his damp brow, and kissed it again and again. She whispered words of Christian comfort to him, and murmured prayers in his still open ears, and a faint smile and convulsive pressure of her hand told her that she was understood, and that she was appreciated and thanked.

And when the crisis came and all was over, and the attendants had hurried into the room with frightened wails and plaints, Gladys Vandeleur closed the eyes of the man who had loved her with constant, deep, and unobtrusive affection which she might never again meet with in mortal man.

CHAPTER XVII.

MR. BROOKS RAWLEIGH'S funeral was over, and the few who were present at its solemn ceremony only remained to learn the disposition of his wealth ere they returned to their respective homes.

The "risen man" had some poor relatives, no doubt; but the only one who was at the Court as a representative of the kindred was a second cousin, of perhaps somewhat more income and decidedly more enterprise than the rest.

He was of the same surname, but his Christian appellation was Job—albeit he by no means did exhibit the Christian spirit of his venerable namesake when at last the time for revealing the real state of affairs arrived.

The solicitor, who was the "family" agent of most of the neighbourhood—a Mr. Tufton, of moderately middle age and a very remarkable amount of coolness and sang-froid—was, of course, the person most concerned, and the one especially looked to for explaining the state of the testator's affairs and wishes.

But when all were there assembled, and he began to speak, there was decidedly more disappointment than satisfaction in the countenances of those concerned.

"I have the unfortunate task before me of informing you, gentlemen," he said, "that there must necessarily be some delay in the arrangement and, I may say, the comprehension of the testator's wishes and property. But the fact is that, though I know a will was made, and properly attested, it cannot be found at present; and as I have no reason whatever to suppose that it has been destroyed, it will be the expedient, decorous, and, I may say, legal course to wait for a few weeks before the assistance of the higher functionaries of the law should be called in as to its disposal."

All present exchanged looks of surprise, but no one expressed what was perhaps the general feeling of disappointment till Job Rawleigh vented his own ideas on the subject in a gruff and coarse tone, which was more offensive and more expressive than his actual words.

"This is a very strange tale, sir," he said. "Pray, how are we to know what search has been made, and why are we to take your word for a will having been made at all? I, for one, am not so easily silenced and bamboozled."

"Possibly, Mr. Job Rawleigh," replied the lawyer, with an inimitable coolness; "but then I fear you will find I have the law on my side. I am prepared to say that the will was not only made, but I can bring forward the witnesses who could prove that such was the case. And as to any search having taken place, I can only assure you that every place in which it could have been supposed to have been deposited has been carefully examined; though of course I am not prepared to say that it does not exist or that it will not turn up, since I have no reason to suppose that Mr. Brooks Rawleigh did destroy it, nor that his intentions did in any respect alter as to his wealth. But you will see that such a thing is possible, and that a man in my client's state of body and mind, without any prospect of death being at hand, might actually destroy a will and not deem it necessary to execute another immediately on such an act. Mind you, I do not for a moment think this has been the case, but I do say that the will, both in law and equity, ought to have a reasonable time for its discovery."

And as meanwhile the affairs will be placed under the control of Chancery, there can be no fear of their being tampered with in the meantime."

It was certainly too reasonable a statement to be complained of or resisted, but the irate kinsman still demurred.

"It is all very fine, Mr. Tufton, but it will not go down with the relatives, I can tell you. It is not only delaying very inconveniently the settlement of the affairs, which will be extremely acceptable to most of us, I can promise you, but it gives great chances for the thing to be cooked up and pretended to be brought to light, and I don't give my consent for myself or my friends to any such proceeding."

"That will be as you choose, Mr. Job," returned the lawyer, cautiously. "I shall give no other reply nor take any other steps than are thus legal and right. In the first place, a receiver will be appointed by the Court of Chancery, and a seal placed on the various repositories, so that there can be no foul or secret play. And as to the presumed will and codicils attached thereto, if it is not discovered in the meantime, it will be open to all to make a last and most thorough examination throughout the house before it is pronounced that Mr. Brooks Rawleigh died intestate, and that the usual results of such a proceeding might follow. Am I not reasonable, gentlemen, as well as acting strictly within my professional capacity?" he added, turning to Sir Louis Vandeleur and those who were witnesses to the scene.

"It assuredly appears so, and the only course to be adopted under the very unusual and unfortunate circumstances," replied the baronet. "I may as well state that the late Mr. Brooks Rawleigh was a candidate for the hand of my eldest daughter, and in all probability would have been a successful suitor had his life been spared."

"And, since he was but in middle age, and his death could scarcely be fairly anticipated, I do not perceive that the grievance is so great to his relatives as this Mr. Job Rawleigh seems inclined to consider it."

"Oh, it's all very fine for rich gentles to talk like that," said Job, angrily, "but I can tell you that a year makes all the difference where even hundreds, to say nothing of thousands, such as I fancy will be divided among us some day, from the pickings here. However, I can't say more, I suppose. I'll just go away now and consult my cousin, and then if we choose we can employ a lawyer on our side, and he may put a different face on matters, you see, my friend," he added, with a decidedly fiercer glance at the unmoved lawyer.

"It must be as you please. I really care nothing about it," replied that gentleman, coolly. "It is open, of course, to any one to make a scandal and a row in family matters, but I for one do not approve of what brings disgrace and wastes money. And having now so clearly understood what has to be done in the case, I think it is useless to detain you farther than to ask you to make the round of the house once more with me, and see the seal of any one of you gentlemen attached to the repositories. I should suggest that it had better be that of some one of you, gentlemen, who is most impartial, and whose seal could not in any manner be well copied or obtained."

The suggestion should scarcely be contraverted, and after a brief discussion it was at last agreed that Sir Louis Vandeleur and Mr. Symes—another gentleman of the county—should affix their seals to the baronet's cabinets, drawers, and repositories, so that there could be no possible chance that they should be tampered with during the interval.

The search was long and carefully minute, but in vain; no trace of any testamentary papers was to be found, and the disappointment of Mr. Job Rawleigh was fair to depart with the rest in a state of most unsatisfactory suspense.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"Run or black, rouge or noir," sounded in the luxurious saloon of one of the half-concealed places of foreign and English resort in the palaces of Soho.

"Noir—black," was pronounced eagerly by the young man who was the next player, and who had a small heap of gold and silver by his side.

It was a study to watch the faces of the various spectators and players in the handsome apartments; the well-satisfied air of the more successful and hardened, the haggard, pale cheeks, in which the large eye seemed to stand out with such painful prominence, and the bitter attempts to conceal and to put a cold, careless veil over the agony of their feelings, would have well furnished materials for some such painters as Dore and as Frith in their happiest moments.

It was so thought by one who was more dispassionate and apart from the fearful and harrowing excitement of the scene, and who looked from one to

the other with half-curious, half-painful interest, though as it seemed his attention rested more especially on the face of Oscar Vandeleur, at the moment when he pronounced that fatal word "Noir—black."

It was a remarkable figure—that tall stranger—with his intellectual, grave features, his foreign bronzed skin his dark gray eyes, and his cloud of dark chestnut, or almost, as it seemed, black hair, in that obscure light.

He was a man not to be passed over without remark by the most careless observer, and perhaps from that circumstance, or from the fact of his not mingling in the game, he had attracted some curious, if furtive glances in the pauses of the game, and from those less immediately interested in its progress.

Oscar said that word on which the fate of at the very least that evening hung.

His eyes glared, literally glared, at the card which was held out before him.

It was the ace of hearts, and he had lost his all of original coins, or those won in the night's chances.

He turned deadly pale for a brief moment, but he was by this time too completely hardened to the terrible ordeal to betray all his bitter agony, and, pushing the heap before him to the new claimant, he strode to the door and rapidly passed from the room, unaware at the moment that he had been both observed, and soon afterwards followed, by the stranger before described.

In truth his thoughts were too miserably engaged for him to be conscious of anything but his own folly and misery.

"My father, this is your work. Surely a curse will follow the unnatural deed," he murmured as he mechanically took the way to the place where he would probably find a conveyance even at that late, or rather early, hour.

It was not audible, save to himself, was that imprecation, that burst of despair, and yet it was perhaps heard and registered where there will ever be justice and mercy for the most sinful and the most helpless.

And it seemed in a measure to relieve the tension of his nerves, or else it was a hidden sound of apparent distress and suffling, an exclamation, though scarcely a cry, that came suddenly on the air in the still night.

Oscar's whole demeanour changed at the exciting sound, he raised his bent head to listen more closely, his eye flashed and the stagnant blood rushed more wildly through his veins at the idea of distress and danger. He darted away in the direction from which the sounds came, and after a brief, fruitless search, in more than one of the thick labyrinthine, he came on the very scene of the contest.

It was apparently a "night attack," for a tall and slight-made man was struggling violently with a far more powerful ruffian, who seemed making desperate efforts to garrote his victim, while in the distance might be seen a figure standing in the shadow, who, perhaps, waited the issue of the life-and-death struggle to give to it his aid.

It did not cost Oscar a moment to decide on his course.

Here the villain was aware he had rushed on him to the rescue, and, seizing him by the collar, so as to liberate the gentleman from his helpless tangle, he threw him with a kind of unnatural strength fairly against the rails near, with such violence that it produced a sort of concussion that stunned him for the moment, and gave the young man an opportunity to escape.

"Quick follow me! You do not know, perhaps, so well as I do, what a den of thieves you are in. It is not a place to be frequented except by those who are well acquainted with every turn in its intricacies."

There was little time for hesitation, the half-choked and stupefied young man who had just been so fortunately rescued plucked up courage and strength to obey his deliverer, and they soon found themselves in more open and civilized regions, where there was little fear of being molested with impunity.

Then, and not till then, did they pause and gaze at each other in a kind of perplexed inquiry, as if to read the very meaning of each other's features.

Oscar, for one, recognized the stranger as the very man who had attracted his attention in the fatal gaming-house.

There was no mistaking those well-marked features nor the bearing which the utmost misery and disguise could not altogether obscure; and, it might be, that Oscar himself was equally recognized by the man he had certainly saved from imminent danger, if not certain death.

"I owe you much. I know not how to express my gratitude—how to repay the obligation," said the stranger, as his breath and consciousness gradually returned.

Oscar gave a somewhat bitter smile at the words, though even his galled and fretted nature could scarcely deny their sincerity.

"Pardon me, you owe me nothing; I should have done the same for any one in a like predicament, and, therefore, there can be no especial obligation," he returned, haughtily.

"Possibly, I did not consider it a personal matter, since you would scarcely comprehend the sound of my voice, nor, had you done so, would it have conveyed any especial meaning to your ears," returned the rescued man, with a kind of cynical coolness. "Still it is an extremely personal question whether I preserved some valuable and ancient jewellery on my dress, or the life that I am weak enough to consider of some importance, at any rate to myself. And, therefore, I may still be pardoned if I were to consider myself your debtor, and to ask if it were in any way possible to express my true and lively sense of what you have done for me."

Perhaps the very self-possession and worldliness of the stranger's tone had more influence than it might otherwise have exercised on the young heir of Vandeleur.

It took away any ideas of "bamboozlement," or of any patronising degradation in acknowledging any fresh obligation and its effects.

But still, misfortune and injury had made him sensitive, and, it might be, unjust in his ideas.

"Between gentlemen there can be no mention of any such obligations," he replied, firmly. "It is only when there is difference of rank that they can exist, and I can as little doubt your station as my own."

The stranger laughed a musical if rather constrained laugh.

"In any case there is no doubting your courtesy, sir," he said, in a tone of half-approving half-amused politeness "but, at any rate, I cannot admit your theory that I owe you nothing, because the obligation has happened to fall on me. And, if I may ask the question, may I inquire what is the name of the gentleman to whom I owe so much?"

Oscar hesitated.

He scarcely cared to blazon his name abroad under the present circumstances of disgrace and danger, and yet to refuse it when thus courteously pressed bore an aspect in it that might well excite the suspicions of the high-bred man whom he felt was so entirely of his own rank and style.

"It is of little moment what may be the name," he said; "but still there is no harm in my telling or in your noting it, albeit it is about as little use. It is Vandeleur, Oscar Vandeleur, but still a humble and poor tutor, in spite of the apparent rank that it may convey."

The stranger gave a slight start, one that might perhaps have arisen from the very announcement that was thus made as to the actual position of the young man to whom he owed so much.

Vandeleur was a name that was certainly well known as bearing rank and position, and yet Oscar had announced himself as a tutor.

Then, too, the very scene in which they had met but now might well add some disquiet to the idea given.

A tutor, the guardian and instructor of others, to be at a gambling-house was about as strange as for a Vandeleur to be a tutor.

All this might well pass through the mind of the stranger, and account for the start and gaze of surprise that the information cost him.

"Well, it can signify little—very little—to me, my friend," he replied, frankly, extending his hand to the half-withheld one of Oscar Vandeleur. "In any case, I must ever be at your service as the preserver of my life, so far as my poor ability may serve to help. Now, may I ask you, as a great favour, to give me the address where I may find you on occasion, and not ever quite lose sight of you in after days?"

It was exactly what Oscar dreaded, and the haughty spirit of his race gave a proud defiance to his tone that was certainly ill-merited by the frank-hearted and kindly demand.

"I need no service and I acknowledge no obligation on your side. It were far better that we should part now, and without any chance of our meeting again. The name I have given you will be a more sure clue than I really wished to your knowing me should we ever be thrown together; and if we are not, it would be idle to burden ourselves with fancied bonds. You are safe now. I will wish you good night, or rather good morning; and if you are indeed a stranger, I would advise you not to risk being about in these purlieus."

And, with a proud bow and a very cold press of the hand, the young man turned on his heel and departed from the spot.

The stranger gazed after him with a cynical smile.

"Strange that man should be so wayward," he said to himself. "There is a fellow in the very

depths of ruin that throws every chance of help and whatever claims he may have on the assistance and the good will of others. What shall I do? Shall I leave him to his fate, or keep some oversight on him that will enable me to step in and so snatch him from destruction? The first is my natural style, but I am not sure that I will not make an exception for this ne'er-do-well for more reasons than one. But I cannot at present quite make out his whereabouts, a tutor is a wide address, and it will take a detective to trace him out from such a clue. Never mind, I expect I shall see him again. There is a terrible fascination where gaming is concerned that even certain ruin cannot conquer. We shall see."

And summoning a hansom to his service, he jumped in and ordered him to be driven to his hotel.

Meanwhile Oscar so far imitated the example of his late companion as to jump into the first cab he could find and drove at full speed to the corner of Westbourne Terrace, where he alighted and paid almost the last coin in his purse for the journey that was taken at so unusual an hour.

He walked rapidly along till he came to the well-known door, and then drawing out the key that he always carried in his pocket, he put it into the door, and opened it softly so as not to disturb the inmates at such an hour.

He walked softly across the hall, and was about to ascend the stairs when he thought that he heard footsteps gently approaching him.

And with an undefined terror of the loving and mocking Lily before his eyes, he was hastening up the stairs without seeming to be aware of the fact that any living creature was awake at such an hour.

But there was a firmness and determination in the step of this alarming new-comer that at once precluded any idea of burglars or of a woman's timid gentleness of step and mien.

The next moment he heard his own name called by a voice that was the sound to be dreaded by him.

It was that of Mr. Joseph Bradley hoarsely demanding:

"Mr. Vandeleur, what in the Evil One's name does all this mean?"

(To be continued.)

PROPOSED RECLAMATION OF THE ZUYDER ZEE.—In twenty years, if the undertaking is successful, the kingdom of Holland will be richer by another province of about 750 square miles.

RECRUITING.—The attention drawn to the subject of re-recruiting by the Duke of Cambridge has had a slight effect at the various stations throughout England, the supply of men appearing to come in somewhat more freely. The army is now several thousands below its proper complement, and charges of fraudulent re-enlistment at Woolwich, Portsmouth, and other garrison towns are rapidly on the increase.

The death of "a wealthy merchant" of Madras, named Parshottam Chetty, took place the other day under the following untimely circumstances:—While engaged in conviviality with some friends, the imprudent merchant offered to bet that he would drink twelve drams of rum one after the other. The wager being accepted, he swallowed dram after dram until he had finished the twelfth, when he fell down in a state of insensibility. Medical assistance was promptly summoned, but it was too late. Parshottam Chetty had wound his wager but he will never be Chetty again.

On Thursday night a popular and beautiful actress emerged from the stage door of the Haymarket Theatre and hailed a cab. Two gentlemen, who presented a decidedly military appearance, were standing by, and one gallantly opened the cab door and helped the lady to enter the vehicle. Then, with somewhat unnecessary politeness, the gentleman archly asked, "Where shall I tell him to drive us to?" "Gower Street," promptly replied the actress. As the perfect gentleman turned to cabby, to tell him the address, the lady closed the door, and holding out a penny to the perfect gentleman, remarked quietly, "Thanks, my good man; drive on coachman!"

DISCOVERY OF HUMAN REMAINS.—A singular discovery of human remains has been made by some men cutting turf in a bog near Drumquin, county Tyrone. The skeleton had been tied with ropes to some boards, with handspikes on each side and two hooped sticks, in which the hands rested. The body was enveloped in what appeared to have been a military cloak, and there was a belt round the waist, in which had been placed a knife, a horse comb, a common comb, and other articles. Curiously made shoes, with silver buckles, were on the feet. The hair was long. On the legs were a kind of breeches with stockings drawn over them, and strapped and

buckled at the knees. The hands had been encased in gloves.

RISEN FROM THE LAPSTONE.

"Risen from the lapstone"—this I heard them say

Of one a little richer than the rest;
They spoke the words in an admiring way,
As though among all good men he were best.

I sought the history of this honoured man,
To profit by it; to my great surprise
I learned he had succeeded in a plan
To gather wealth by meanness, fraud and lies.

There was no trick of gain that he would shun;

There was no mean device he left untried,

If haply thus some profits might be won:
All which they told me with apparent pride.

They merely saw the gold the man had gained,
The stocks he owned, the lands he held in fee;

Nor were their coarser natures shocked or pained
By what the shirt of Nessus seemed to be.

"Risen from the lapstone"—others said the same,

And curled their lips and gave a scornful leer,
As though the lapstone were a thing of shame.

The fitting subject for a bitter sneer.
Their scorn was for the honest trade at which

The man had ceaseless wrought in manhood's prime,

Not for the practices that made him rich;

Their sneer was for his calling, not his crimes.

Gaining his wealth so vilely did he rise?

What fool asserts it? When his hammer's clank

Spoke frequent from the lapstone, in our eyes

He could not well attain a higher rank;

But when through avarice he threw away

Good men's respect, became the slave of greed,

Pinched here, grasped yonder, crawling day by day—

We know he found the lowest depth indeed.

Labour is honour: He who toils creates,

And who creates above mere idlers stands;

He is a soft-brained fool who arrogates

Himself great credit for his stainless hands;

Yet he who riches wins by patient toil,

And honest thrift, and noble enterprise,

Keeping his spirit free from taint and soil,

Be he but modest, may be said to rise.

Labour has dignity. Kings held the plough

And deemed it honour. The incarnate God

Till middle manhood bathed his sacred brow

With labour's dew. And publish it abroad

That those who win immunity from toil

By petty tricks that hold the soul in thrall,

By meanness that name and honour soil,
From their condition do not rise but fall.

T. D. E.

Good news for the antiquarians. A book has been discovered which will throw light on the birth of chemistry in Egypt, and perhaps throw the labours of Paracelsus far into the shade. It is called "Papyrus Ebers, the Hermetic book of the Medicines of the Ancient Egyptian." It is said to throw great light on the manners and customs of Egypt, to be full of erudite learning, and to contain some facts which even modern chemists will be none the worse for knowing.



[THE UNWELCOME GUEST.]

THE ISLAND MYSTERY.

CHAPTER IV.

They found Colonel Selwyn and William porrovergingly at work over the still insensible stranger, while Maggie stood by, handing warm blankets, and fresh drinks, and lending every possible aid. He was breathing quite naturally, but had not yet opened his eyes.

Colonel Selwyn for a moment dropped the hand he had been chafing, and turned to inquire anxiously of Mark concerning his own recovery.

As Mark sank into a chair, with a cheery smile, which relieved the apprehensions excited by his extreme paleness, Jessie came forward to take a curious glance at the stranger's face. The pale hand drooping heavily over the counterpane arrested her eye. She started. A singular look of mingled astonishment and suppressed excitement swept across her face as she glanced for the second time at the large and very peculiar and old-fashioned ring on the little finger.

She stepped on hastily, and gave one earnest look at the stricken face.

It was that of an elderly man, the features sharply defined, somewhat gaunt, and, as he lay now, the eyes closed, the lips drawn down with an expression sinister and cynical. The wet locks of gray hair streamed back upon the pillow, the ears were cold and white, as if fashioned of ice.

Long and earnest was the girl's inspection. And she only withdrew when the colonel returned to his post.

"An elderly man," observed she, calmly; "you think he will survive the shock, do you not?"

"I am sure I cannot tell. The doctor has given us directions to call him the moment consciousness returns. He has some very serious cases down in the gardener's house, he told me."

Mark made an effort, and came likewise to the bedside.

"Poor old man, I hope he will survive, and know many happy years yet. It is rather a peculiar feeling I have for him. I cannot bear to think he will meet sorrows, or be guilty of wrong-doing."

"You remember the old superstition about saving a drowning man," observed the colonel; "it's very unlikely in this case; it it was a young man, there might possibly be a chance for him to become a mortal enemy. I think you are quite safe here, my boy."

Mark laughed lightly.

The sound seemed to penetrate to the torpid brain. The eyelids suddenly fluttered away, and a pair of keen, cold, gray eyes looked straight into Mark's face.

"Where am I? What has happened?" asked the old man, in a feeble voice, but still in calm, measured accents.

"It is all right, all right, sir; don't you fret yourself a bit," exclaimed the colonel, pushing his head before Mark's arm.

A little bewildered by the reply, the old man's eye ran from face to face.

"You were in the ship that was wrecked, and are saved now," interposed Mark.

"Ah, yes, I remember. Whereabouts am I? On what part of the coast?"

Mark informed him briefly.

"I must be near an old friend, if I remember rightly. How far off is Shonstone Manor?"

"Ten miles," replied the colonel, in utter astonishment; "why, it is Mark Shonstone here who saved your life for you."

He waved his hand toward the young man, and that icily glittering eye followed the movement, and rested on Mark's face.

"Mark Shonstone—Mark, Mark—oh, yes, I know—Serle's son—Serle's son Mark."

Mark bowed, with a pleasant smile.

"I am very glad I have been able to help one of my father's friends; perhaps I know you well by description, for my father is apt to talk a great deal about his favourites. We will take you over to the manor as soon as you can bear the ride. My father will be delighted to see you."

A grim smile crossed that cynical mouth.

"No doubt, no doubt; yet I question if you have heard my name. It is a great many years since I have seen him. I intend to make my home with him for a little while. I think I can go to sleep now."

Saying which, he closed his eyes.

The colonel glanced at Mark, and Mark had some difficulty in smothering a laugh, and one by one they withdrew, and left William with the patient.

As he helped him back to the sitting-room sofa the colonel said:

"Well, Mark, I don't know what kind of a fish it is you have pulled out of the sea, but I should say it was a very queer specimen."

"I should think so!" exclaimed Maggie, indignantly. "I think another time, Mark, I would leave him floundering in the water, if we have seen a fair show of his gratitude to you."

Jessie never spoke a word. She sat down in the

rocking-chair with a grave face, and leaned her head wearily on her hand.

"You are completely used up, Jessie!" cried the colonel, observing it, "and, indeed, no wonder, with this night of excitement. Why, it must be near morning. You and Maggie must go to your beds at once. I must look after the rest of the rescued ones, though I admit my zeal is somewhat dampened."

"I think the old gentleman imagines he has landed in an hotel," observed Maggie, dryly. "I really congratulate you, Mark, upon the acquisition you will have to your home circle. How coolly he announced his intentions, and without giving his name either. I don't believe in their being friends—your delicate, sensitive, over-refined father, and this cool, stony block. Only think, if you had lost your life in trying to rescue that thankless creature!"

"Spare your indignation, my little Maggie," replied Mark, laughingly; "he may prove a rough diamond, and we may yet be convinced of intrinsic worth beyond present guessing. That he is my father's friend is warrant for my postponing judgment, for you know he chooses cautiously, and invariably is correct in his estimation of people's characters. As soon as I learn his name I must beg the colonel's permission to allow me to send a servant over to the Manor."

"Certainly; and, Maggie, my darling, don't allow your indignation at his ingratitude for Mark's heroic exertions to put away from your mind the remembrance of his actual condition—a shipwrecked guest, given by the storm to our hospitality."

Maggie, looking a little repentant, went over to Jessie Wharton.

"Come, Jessie, I really think there is no farther need of our remaining here. We shall be dull enough to-morrow, at the best. Let us save what time we can."

Jessie arose, still mute and undemonstrative.

"Good night, papa—good night, thou brave young hero," said Maggie, gaily, as she took the candle.

Jessie went up to Mark, and held out her hand.

"Good night, Mark; you are indeed beyond all heroes."

"Pshaw!" said Mark, impatiently, "you will drive me frantic. I taboo all allusion to the deed. Why am I any better than the dozen sailors who manned the life-boat?"

Then seeing the tears rising to her eyes, he added, kindly:

"Good night, my tender-hearted cousin; try to sleep off this excitement, or you will be ill to-morrow."

She went away without another word. But when Maggie would have lingered in her chamber Jessie peremptorily dismissed her.

"Go to your bed at once, Maggie dear. I shall be over so long unwinding my hair."

So Maggie retired at once, and was sound asleep, while the girl sat still in the same attitude, never stirring for more than an hour. She made no movement then toward sleeping, but opening the corridor door very softly, she listened, anxiously.

Everything was quiet, and, without her candle, she crossed the wide hall, descended the stairs, and stood a moment, hesitatingly, before the door of the room where she had left the old man under William's care. Then turning the handle very softly, she passed on.

William was dozing beside the bed, but the bright, gray eyes of the patient fell directly upon her face. His stupor had been succeeded by a wakeful irritation. He looked at her wonderingly.

She turned to William, calmly, and with the utmost composure.

"Could you get a little camphor for me, William? I did not like to ring the bell, because I knew what a hard night every one has had, but my head aches badly, and I feel sure it would relieve it. There was cologne enough in my room, but no camphor. I know you would be up and awake, so I came here."

The servant, of course, very willingly obeyed. The moment he had gone the girl turned to the attentive watcher.

"I am Jessie Wharton," said she. "I recognized you at once, but I did not care they should know it."

A bright glow kindled upon the pallid face.

"Jessie, my darling, is it possible? How you have grown! Why, you have a look like a queen!" exclaimed the old man, half-raising himself from the bed, and stretching out both hands to her.

She gave him to kiss somewhat oddly, but he was too eager and pleased to notice it.

"Ah, how pretty you have grown! You are happy, it is plain to see. And how are matters progressing? I counted up what your age would be, and I deemed it time to come and redeem my promise to you. You have not forgotten it, have you?"

A bright red spot shone on her cheek.

"Forgotten it? No! did I not recognize you at once?"

"And do you still wish that I should fulfil it?" he asked, the sharp eyes full upon her face.

How like his own grew those gray eyes of hers as they seemed to gleam softly.

"Above all things else in the world," answered she, hastily, and in a quivering voice.

"It shall be done," was all he answered.

Then, drawing her towards him by the hand he held, he fondly and admiringly examined her face.

"Perhaps there was no need of my coming," said he; "you are so brave and comely, you would win the prize without my help."

"One cannot tell," replied she, "but I am glad you have come."

"You have thought of me, then—you have loved me a little? Child, child, but for your sake, I could never have stayed away so long. I knew it was best. Now that I see you as grand and smart as any of them, I am rewarded. You must have loved me a little, Jessie, or how did you recognize me?"

She smiled softly, nor gave a hint that the well-remembered ring on his finger revealed his identity, which closer observation corroborated.

"Don't let them know it yet," said she, hastily, as she heard William's steps without.

"But, Jessie, after all these long years, am I to have no kiss?"

Jessie Wharton shuddered, but she put her arms around his neck, and kissed him.

"Good night."

"My pride, my joy, am I not to have the name from your lips which I have yearned for so long?"

She laid her lips to his ear, and whispered it, and turned in time to open the door for William, who came loaded with camphor and harshorn.

"Thank you, William. I am sorry to trouble you. I shall be better now, I am sure."

And she flitted away to her own chamber, and when, late in the morning, Maggie came into the room, she found her friend in a sweet slumber.

The great house at the Cliff presented a somewhat amping and very confused appearance the next day, looking, as Maggie laughingly declared, like a hospital very suddenly improvised.

The patients were most of them very comfortable; only one had died, and but one had been beyond resuscitation. Down half a mile below the house, on the beach where the tide drifted the fragments, was the saddest scene. There, some score of fishermen were bringing in the corpses of those hapless

victims of the shipwreck found wedged among the rocks or floating among the foamy breakers.

But the inmates of the mansion saw nothing of this, and the cheery light of day had in a measure dispersed the horror of the night.

They came around the breakfast table with serene faces; Mark was quite himself, only, a twinge gave him a foretaste of what he might expect when old and gouty.

The stranger was reported by William as extremely comfortable.

"I'm going in for his name," remarked the colonel, as he rose from the table.

"Do by all means. Say that I wish to send word to my father," returned Mark.

The colonel returned in a few moments.

"Why, Mark, it is the Australian geologist, who has become quite well known of late, by means of his very able letters to the Society. Kimmouth is his name. He desired me especially to refrain from sending any word to Shenstone Manor. He will ride over to-morrow and take his old friend by surprise."

"I hope he improves upon daylight acquaintance," remarked Maggie, briskly.

"He is evidently very courteous, and not remarkably gentlemanly in manner, but he is our guest, Maggie—don't let me have to remind you of that again."

"I know I am wrong, papa, but I took such a dislike to the man for his unfeeling manner last night. I daresay he had not fairly returned to his senses. He has been asking all about it of me, and praised Mark as warmly as he deserves."

"Then I am sure I shall forgive him. I shall recall my invitations to the young ladies, or rather defer them a little later."

"I think I must return with Mr. Kimmouth to-morrow," said Mark.

"And our pleasant week is scattered to the winds," pouted Maggie.

"Not at all; only postponed. You will have Jessie to comfort you."

"I beg your pardon, Mark, I shall accompany you to the Manor, if you have no objections," interposed Jessie, her cheek flushing.

"Certainly; I have no desire to hinder your return, Jessie, but pray don't go unless inclination prompts, for there will be no claim this guest can have upon your society. Stay here and enjoy, yourself, if you choose."

"Mrs. Shenstone likes to have me at home when there are guests in the house," answered Jessie, hastily.

"So be it, then," retorted Mark, somewhat puzzled by her manner. "Now, then, for a visit to the geologist."

Mr. Kimmouth received Mark with another of those singular smiles.

"Good morning, sir; I am glad to find you so much improved."

"Good morning it has proved, young man. They tell me it is all owing to you that I am here to see the morning at all."

"I did the best I could—so did they all. I admit you had a narrow escape. I am very thankful we were permitted to save so many."

"I hope you won't repent of it!" was the short return. "It was a lucky thing I sent my valuables before me, wasn't it? I suppose the ship went down at last?"

"I believe it did; the storm was a very sudden and violent one. I fear we shall hear of very many disasters along the coast."

Mr. Kimmouth evidently had not listened to a word he said. He was drumming on the side of the bedstead with his withered fingers.

Looking up suddenly he asked:

"How is your father's health now-a-days?"

"Very good, indeed; he is not robust, you know, but still he's seldom ill."

"And his spirits, is he gay and cheerful all the time?"

Mark's face showed surprise at the question.

"A man's mind gives the true state of his health," explained Mr. Kimmouth, "that is what I was after. You must be rather lonely there. I believe you are the only child. How Mrs. Shenstone must sigh for a daughter's companionship!"

"She has a niece of my father's with her. Jessie is like a daughter to her."

The sharp gray eyes winked.

"Ah, indeed! Is she an agreeable young lady?"

"What a bore! I wonder if he has any more questions on hand," thought Mark, though he answered him respectfully enough.

"We are all very fond of Jessie; but you will have an opportunity for forming your own judgment. She is already in the house, and will accompany us to Shenstone Manor."

He rubbed his hands together and gave a chuckling laugh which somewhat astonished Mark.

"I want to be off to-morrow," said the strange old man, presently.

"Colonel Selwyn has kindly put his carriage at our disposal."

"He is a very good-natured fellow, he has been very kind to me. Well, well, your father will thank him!"

And again that disagreeable chuckle.

Mark could hardly control his excessive repugnance, and as soon as possible he made an excuse for leaving.

"How strange my father should have been friends with such an entirely opposite character! It is odd too, that I have never heard his name mentioned at home," mused Mark.

Early the next morning the carriage of Colonel Selwyn was at the door, and the old man was carefully assisted into it.

Jessie and Mark rode on horseback before it. They reached the Manor therefore a few moments in advance.

Jessie ran into the house, while Mark, seeing his father in a distant garden path, gave the horses to a groom, and went out to meet him.

"What, home again so soon, my boy!" said Mr. Shenstone, with an affectionate smile; "your mother thought Maggie would get up attractions enough to keep you a week."

"Rather an unexpected incident occurred," replied Mark, determined to satisfy his curiosity in reference to the depth of his father's friendship for Kenneth Kimmouth.

"Why, yes, it was very severe; but you certainly had reached the Cliff? We decided there was no question about it."

"Oh, yes, we were safely housed before it burst upon us. But we had a fearful night there. There was a most disastrous shipwreck directly off the Cliff. A great many lives were lost, but we saved a good many, too."

"I have not looked at the papers for a day or two, where was the ship from?"

"From Australia, and among the saved was a friend of yours. I picked him up myself twice, for he was helpless when our boat capsized. He is coming now up the avenue to visit you, he claims to be an old friend."

"What is his name?" demanded the father, in a hoarse voice.

"Kilmouth, Kenneth Kilmouth."

"Oh, heavens!" ejaculated Mr. Shenstone, reeling backwards, as if from a deadly blow, "and you saved him, you, my son, saved him from a watery grave?"

"I certainly did!" exclaimed Mark, alarmed and perplexed at his father's extreme agitation.

Serie Shenstone passed his hand over his clamy forehead, and struggled desperately for calmness, but his lips were fairly blue, and his cheek pallid and deathly.

"What is the matter, father? If the man troubles you I will send him off. He shall not disturb you. I disliked him from the first minute, but he declared you were old friends, and coolly informed me he should come to the Manor. See, the carriage is just returning to the house, say quickly if I shall turn it back."

"No, no," cried his father, in a sharp voice, wringing his hands distractedly, and, then, seeing the astonished, anxious looks of his son, he rallied, and said, more cheerfully:

"I am foolishly nervous to-day. Your mother has been telling me for some time that I was ill; I believe it now. The name recalled some painful memories, and the man himself is not a prepossessing person, but there is every reason why he should be civilly received. Go, make him welcome, Mark, my boy, while I recover my composure, and try to calm my outrageous nerves."

"The old witch was not so far out of the way," muttered Mark, as he strode away, "mystery, perplexity, and distress to come from over the sea. Here it is with a vengeance. Her jargon grows intelligible."

He went along, slowly, to the carriage. His mother stood in the doorway, evidently much surprised, but welcoming the unknown guest with ladylike hospitality.

"An acquaintance of my father's, dear mother," said Mark, hurrying forward, "one who has been shipwrecked, and is something of an invalid still. My mother, Mrs. Shenstone, Mr. Kilmouth. She bids you welcome to Shenstone Manor," said Mark.

And unconsciously there was defiance and haughtiness both in his tone.

"He! so the old one has shown his spirit," muttered Mr. Kimmouth, inaudibly.

"My father will be here in a moment. He was not in the house when I arrived. Come in, and take a rest."

Mr. Kimmouth's manner seemed to Mark to grow

still more offensive after he entered the house. He looked around him scrutinizingly, and with an authority, as though he were rightful master, instead of a transient guest.

When his father at length appeared, without exactly understanding why, Mark's cheek flushed hotly with angry humiliation.

The host wore an humble, depressing air, which seemed almost cringing, while the self-invited guest behaved with all the assurance and patronizing coolness of a prince.

"Well, Shenstone, so you see I am here once more, of course you are delighted to see me. But you nearly lost the pleasure. The sea threatened to swallow me, but your gallant son there gave me back to you. I told him you would thank him for the brave deed."

"Yes," answered the host, mechanically, "you had a very narrow escape, Mark told me about it. But you must be anxious to rest after your long ride. Mark, will you summon Jean to assist Mr. Kinnmouth to his chamber?"

"Pray, don't trouble yourself, I am quite refreshed already. It does me good, you see, to look at an old friend's face once more. You and I have been friends a good many years, let me see, how far back can we count?"

The host winced, choked down a shuddering sigh, and forced his quivering lips to answer, coldly:

"I am not accurate about such things. Did you enjoy your Australian life?"

"Tolerably; I set so long to stay, and I should have stood it out had I been ever so disgraced. You know I was never one of your Will-o'-the-Wisp fellows. What I make up my mind to is pretty sure to come out straight. Nobody yet ever accused me of being soft or weak, did they now, Shenstone?"

He bent forward, and looked into that gentleman's face, with significant leer, rather than smile.

The latter started up, and walked to the window to hide his annoyance, and as soon as possible left the room.

CHAPTER V.

A fortnight passed, and as Mark privately declared to his mother, it could scarcely be credited that it was the same household; so completely had the presence of the Australian guest changed the condition of things.

His rough, boorish manners were of themselves enough to make such a sensitive and refined person as Serle Shenstone quite unhappy, but he seemed to take delight in torturing him by an hundred different methods, which the anxious wife and son could not in the least comprehend, although they were very sadly made acquainted with the result in the unmistakable agony of the master of the house, his feverish and unavailing desire of concealing it only alarming his friends the more.

"Mother," said Mark, one day, when Kinnmouth had been unusually boisterous and ranting, carrying himself so authoritatively even the servants resented it, "I am not going to bear it any longer. I shall just give the fellow to understand that unless he wants me to throw him back into the sea from which I pulled him out on that business night, he had better find other quarters for himself."

"I cannot blame you, Mark," answered Mrs. Shenstone, gravely, "it is a perfect mystery how your father can endure him here, when he is so disagreeable to him. He says the man has done him favours in other days, and talks about a host's politeness. For my own part, I think there are other duties paramount to mere hospitality, especially when the other is so thanklessly received. And whatever the old obligation may be, surely you have cancelled it in saving his life. I really shall be heartily thankful to you, Mark, if you will give the unwelcome guest a quiet hint that we are satisfied of the propriety of his leaving the Manor. I would not wound your father for the world, did I not see how this irritating old man is wearing him out. He gets so nervous through the day, he scarcely sleeps at all through the night. We shall have him seriously ill presently. I am confident beside, that he will as joyfully bid him adieu as either of us."

"By the way, mother, it's queer he and Jessie get along so well together. The old curmudgeon is actually gracious to her, and you never hear a word of complaint from her, considering his behaviour."

"Yes, Mark, I have noticed it. But Jessie was always a queer girl. It always seemed to me he had another identity, and an inner life sedulously concealed from me. For your father's sake I have tried to be a mother to her. I have also tried to give her a mother's love, but Mark, my dear boy, I will tell you a secret, till now jealously guarded. I never have loved Jessie. I never could love her, a strange, inexplicable intuition always repelled me."

"You have indeed deviously concealed it. I think it would grieve my father."

"No," said Mrs. Shenstone, decidedly, "it would

not—that is, in reality. I have no doubt he would try to convince me of it, but I have not been his wife for more than twenty years in vain. He shares the feeling. I have seen him shrink when her hand accidentally touched his. He gives her his presents, many affectionate words, but did you ever see him lay his hand on her head in that tender fashion he is so fond of bestowing upon you and me?"

Mark drew a long sigh and looked away. "That fortune-teller again," muttered he, "the lines are growing mixed most decidedly. I must go and learn the rest."

His mother caught but a few words.

"Yes, the fortune-teller said something to Jessie which did not please her, I thought. She would not tell us about it—we only saw that it was not agreeable. But about your speaking to Mr. Kinnmouth, Mark, I am not sure but you had better give your father a hint of your intentions."

"I will see. Don't look so troubled, dear mother. It is very annoying to be sure, but after all nothing worth distressing yourself about."

And Mark went away, determined to settle the question at once, very indignant at his father's weakness and extremely wrath with the willful obstinacy of the old man.

He found the pair walking down the garden path.

Mr. Kinnmouth was talking eagerly and somewhat loudly, though the sense of the words did not reach Mark. But when he saw his father's face, for the first time a sharp fear darted into the young man's mind.

It was so wan and woe-begone, so imploring and frantically distressed as it was turned to that grim old man.

Mark strode forward, made less conspicuous, and more abrupt by the sight.

"Mr. Kinnmouth," said he, "my mother and I were talking just now of a journey to London, and I thought I had better wait and accompany you. I presume you will be going by to-morrow or next day—which?"

He started with a hearty laugh.

"Pretty well done, my boy. So Madame and the heir are both tired of me! Well, well, that's a good joke. What do you say, Serle Shenstone? Shall I take my departure?"

The miserable master turned an imploring glance upon his son, and then answered, hastily:

"No, no, of course you won't. Mark didn't mean anything of the sort, did you, Mark? We are all glad to have you stay."

"Well, youngster, what do you think of that?" asked their tormentor, turning with a triumphant smile to Mark.

"I think that my father's fear of giving offence deals hardly with his candour. At all events I must speak for myself. I do think your behaviour here is extremely unbecoming in a guest, and it will be a great relief when you are gone," answered Mark, boldly.

"Oh, Mark," cried his father, reproachfully.

Kinnmouth only laughed vociferously.

"Let the boy rave, and the little dogs bark, what harm is either? I would inform you, young gentleman, that I don't consider myself a guest at all. I make it my business here at Shenstone Manor. I must go up to London pretty soon, to see about my geological affairs and my drafts, but I shall hurry back just to please you and your dainty mother, you know."

And he laughed again in the most insolent tone.

"Villain creature!" cried Mark, quite beside himself with rage, "dare you speak in that tone of my mother? Father, in Heaven's name, have spirit enough to order him out. His age alone saves him from my just anger, or he would be lying at my feet."

Serle Shenstone's face was fairly livid with the agitation of his contending emotions, his whole frame shook as with an ague.

"Well," said the old man, folding his arms calmly, "are you going to order me out, or this valiant young man into the house, one or the other must be done."

The owner of Shenstone Manor glared one moment fiercely into that coldly glittering eye, but his own slowly sank, the deep red flush of shame crept over his face as he turned to the youth, standing there, every pulse throbbing hotly with indignation.

"Go in, Mark, I do not wish you to stay."

"Father, have you lost your senses?" cried Mark, in mingling grief and astonishment.

"Go in, if you have any regard to my authority," repeated Mr. Shenstone, averting his face from Mark's troubled glance.

Mr. Kinnmouth flung him a defiant glare from those steel-like eyes.

"Don't try to interfere with me, young man, and I shall be a good friend to you," said he, sarcastically, "leave me alone, and we shall agree charmingly."

"Would to Heaven I had left you alone at our first meeting!" burst from Mark's lips, so irritated and desperate had he become.

"To be sure, there is an old saying which might have taught you better, but I don't want to quarrel with you, boy; I like your spirit any way."

"Go, go, Mark!" exclaimed his father, imploringly.

Mark walked away with hanging cheeks and set teeth.

"How preposterous! how humiliating!" groaned he; "my heart sorely misgives me. There must be some horrible secret, or my father could never have changed so. It was plain to see it nearly broke his heart to side against me, and yet he dared not do otherwise."

He walked along a little way in silence, and then exclaimed, resolutely:

"I will go again to the Wizard's Isle. I will compel the old witch to explain it, if indeed, her prophecy was not an accidental coincidence. It will be a relief to be absent at dinner. I could not swallow a mouthful, after this humiliating scene, either in my father's presence, or with the basilisk eye of that evil old man upon me. I will take my gun, and a box of luncheon, and keep away until evening."

He hurried into the house. His mother met him at the hall door, but Mark was too tender a son to add to her anxiety by the disclosure of the ill result of his mission.

"I think I shall take my gun and go out for the day, dear mother. I don't mean to return till our unwelcome guest has retired, so don't be anxious about me. I promise to be very careful. I won't load the gun until I have left the box; and I will heed your cautions, all of them; so promise my precious one, not to fret about me."

She kissed him fondly, and went herself to fill his hunter's luncheon-box.

As Mark went striding down the avenue, gun on his shoulder, he met the two gentlemen returning. He was conscious of his father's pleading glance, but was not yet cool enough to meet it.

So, carrying his head loftily, and making straight ahead, he passed on as though entirely ignorant of their vicinity.

But that mocking, taunting laugh came floating back to him, tingling in his ears like the scream of a vulture.

He rushed down to the little cove, where his boat lay, like one driven by the furies.

Rufus White saw him, and, rising from the log by the boat-house, where he was sitting mending a net, he went hastily to meet him.

"Anything the matter, Master Mark? Can I help you?"

"Oh, no, thank you, Rufus. I'm off for a day's sport somewhere. If I wasn't in the mood for being alone, I'd ask you to accompany me."

"Oh, I've plenty of work at home," responded Rufus, trying to hide his disappointment. "Good luck to you!"

"Thank you, Rufus; I'm sure I need it," muttered Mark, as he pushed off.

Once flying over the water his bitter mood passed off.

Nature's own kindly spell soothed and calmed him.

He began to recall now the sweet face that looked up to him from the haunted spring.

He had intended to search the island over thoroughly before this time, but the unexpected appearance of the Australian guest had changed all his plans.

He exulted now in the prospect of a lengthy visit to the isle, free from molestation.

The boat seemed to share his impatience, and it flew forward like a bird.

The wind was just the favourable one required, and Mark steered directly for the ledge.

He glanced eagerly along the beach as he was securing the boat, but no sign of living creature was visible.

Straight on toward the haunted spring went Mark, without pause or stay. He had nearly forgotten his late vexation and anxiety. Only one thought now filled his mind. Should he see that charming face in the water, or was it only a myth, a dream of his excited imagination?

When he gained the spot, the first hesitation fell upon him. It would be so sore a disappointment to find the vacant shimmer of the glassy surface, so disagreeable a change to see old Marjorie's witch's profile, much though he desired to speak to her.

He went over the stones, step by step, with a childish distaste for receiving positive information concerning his hopes and fears.

He stood a moment vibrating on the rim, then bent down, and with momentarily suspended breath, looked into the water.

An exclamation of regret escaped him. On the edge the outstretching sprays of moss, the feathery ferns nodded coquettishly to their doubles above, but the centre was one blank glow of glassy surface.

He was turning away pettishly, when, like the sudden gliding of a picture from the lens of a magic lantern, the beautiful face seemed to float up to the surface.

"Now I will be cool," said Mark, after the first transport of recognition. "I will know by what arrangement the reflection is dropped into the pool. I will trace the shadow back and find the object."

He stepped back a few paces, and carefully scrutinized all points from which an imaged shadow could be cast into the pool.

He did not use his former hasty general survey, but began in order, and went up patiently from object to object. It was long before his eye brightened. He laid down his gun, and began deliberately to climb up the steepest ascent toward an isolated pine tree.

It was no enviable task, but he was aided by a resolute determination. He swung himself from limb to limb, leaped over rocks, caught at saplings for help, and at last stood triumphant at the foot of the pine.

It was ample reward, according to his ideas, to find on the outer limb, cunningly secured there, a very clear and highly polished mirror.

From this spot he turned to find the next focus. The bright sunshine was a friendly guide, a rough sunbeam slid away from the mirror, and kindled a bright flash on another glass still higher up on the opposite side.

Nothing daunted, Mark descended, and began his toilsome ascent on the other side.

He had almost gained his second clue, when either his eagerness, or a flash of light from the glass, blinded him. He made a misstep, caught at a bush to save himself; the shallow root gave way, and down came Mark. Not, however, falling to the little glen, but lodging at the root of an old dead tree, half-way down.

His foot entangled in the vines, he lay, head downward, powerless to extricate himself, for the first attempt gave him such exquisite pain he nearly fainted.

He shouted lustily for help, but felt himself growing giddy with the slightest exertion, and abandoned the attempt in consternation.

It seemed but a few moments, even to Mark in his state of torment, before the branches of a low, stunted beech were parted, and from his point of vision, seeming to emerge from the blue ether itself, came forward the sweet, girlish face he had seen reflected in the mirror.

It was pale now, and the dark eyes wore a look of wild affright.

"Oh, what can I do to help you? There is no one on the island to call. Are you nearly killed?"

"Oh, no," answered Mark, with a strong effort to keep his tones firm from the quiver of pain.

"I cannot very well move without risking another fall, even if able. I suspect my ankle is broken. If you could drop me something to hold by, I think I could manage to raise myself after a few trials."

She stood a moment irresolute, then unwinding a long scarlet cashmere scarf from her waist, she slipped carefully downward toward him.

"Pray be careful, or you will fall yourself," continued Mark, struggling for mental control, which the rush of blood to his head might well endanger.

She descended with the utmost caution, clinging to tree-trunk and down-reaching branch, until, pausing, she secured the scarf at one end to a small tree; then, taking the other end in her hand, she gave it to Mark's eager fingers.

She, supporting herself by one hand, passed the other arm under his head, and carefully lifted while he pulled himself up.

The movement was exquisite agony for his ankle, but Mark set his teeth into his lip, and choked down the groan.

It was accomplished, after one or two ineffectual attempts, and then, shuddering with pain and exhaustion, Mark sank in a heap upon the ground, his back against the tree.

The scarlet flush which had suffused his face faded, now that he sat upright, into pallor.

She looked at him in extreme alarm.

"You are suffering frightfully," said she, in sweet, pitying tones.

Mark swallowed down the sob which rose to his throat, and answered:

"It will be better in a moment; don't distress yourself, I pray you."

"If you could only get a little farther, you could rest secure, and could bring something to help you; if you would lean on me—I am strong enough; I really wish you would try. Won't it grow worse so you can't be moved at all?"

"There is something in that. I confess you are right. Did you say you were alone on the island? The—gentleman or his housekeeper—are neither at home?"

"Neither, or I should have called them long ago. And will you really try? Lean on me, I beg of you."

"I don't think I can stand up. I must crawl. Aren't you afraid of my bringing evil to your Eden, fair angel?"

She laughed a little, notwithstanding her anxiety.

"I wonder why you were climbing here, that is all."

"I shall not dare to tell you now," answered he, lifting himself up, and crawling slowly and painfully over the rough and slanting ground.

She followed behind, her eyes full of tears and sympathy.

"I wish I could help you. I know it is torture for you; but only a little farther, and you may rest."

She led the way, after they left the precipitous side of the high hill, to a little sunny dell, a higher elevation, but similar to that of the haunted pool.

She gave him time to rest here, for suddenly she paused and stood a moment irresolute.

Mark watched the varying emotions on her ingenuous face.

"Do not take me anywhere to cause any annoyance or disturbance for yourself. I would rather crawl to my boat," said he.

She blushed while she smiled.

"I was debating whether my father would be angry should I take you to my own little nest—for myself I have no hesitation or fear. I know well enough you would never use the knowledge of my presence here for any harm. But he, my father—the Wizard the foolish country people call him—wishes to keep that knowledge from every one; he does not dream that any one suspects my existence. But you have known it before this. Alas, it was my fault."

It was a wild, mad caprice, when I saw you consulting the haunted spring, to send down my image to the water. I thought you were like the rest, and would believe it magic. I was frightened enough when I perceived you judged differently. I recognized you at once when I saw you securing your boat to the reef, and I had resolved to seek you and implore your secrecy concerning the whole affair even before this happened."

"You may rely on me. Not a hint of it has passed my lips to any one," exclaimed Mark, eagerly. "You were right. I was sure it was a mortal maiden. I was determined to find you. I was climbing to find the mirror nearest the object when I fell."

She blushed again and shook her graceful head.

"See what a punishment has come for your foolish temerity."

"Ah!" cried Mark, even while wincing with pain, "if that was the only way to find you, I am very thankful it has happened."

She cast down her eyes, and was silent; then, smiling graciously, she exclaimed:

"I shall take you to the nest—there is certainly no other way."

"Yes, there are a dozen in preference, if that course is to draw your father's anger upon you," retorted Mark. "I can crawl down to my boat, or you can roll me over the precipice. I won't be the means of giving pain to you, whatever the alternative."

"And so you won't want to see my little retreat—so you won't venture with me?" asked she, with a pretty, coaxing smile, almost irresistible.

"Don't I?" exclaimed Mark. "I know I shall think that I am in fairyland, tended by their queen; but it is the compromising you that I reject. If I could take all your father's anger on myself, it would be another thing."

"How absurd we both are," she said, "here we stand arguing, while we ought to be attending to the wounded limb, and about a myth, too; my father was never angry with me in his life. He won't be angry with you, if you refrain from explaining the foolish object of your climbing. Now you will come, please, as a favour to me, you know."

"Ah; I cannot resist you now," said Mark, and gave his gesture of assent.

She turned instantaneously, and led the way across a smooth piece of turf, through a cleared path, winding along the underbrush to what seemed an impenetrable thicket of tangled vines, thorny bushes and matted shrubbery.

But at her touch a little verdant gateway unclosed, and gave them passage.

Within was an open ring of carefully cultivated ground, and a tiny cottage completely covered by trailing vines.

(To be continued.)

THE DRAMA.

"MASKS AND FACES," AT THE PRINCE OF WALES'S.

In "Masks and Faces" Mrs. Bancroft and her company have scored another great success. Surely no theatre during the last ten years has made more hits than the elegant little house in Tottenham Court Road! With the exception of two or three comedies, "Tame Cats" reckoning as one, and the fiasco, "Merchant of Venice," every comedy, whether new or revived, has proved a profit both to the management and to the public.

In Messrs. Charles Reade's and Tom Taylor's well-known comedy there is plenty of opportunity for strong and polished acting; there is also some provocation to extravagance, but the Prince of Wales's company has, with its usual intelligence, availed itself of the former and wisely resisted the latter. There is throughout the piece a continuance of careful, conscientious and high-class acting, and in no one scene any extravagance or overstraining for effect. It says much for the present condition of the Drama, as against the numerous pessimists who are continually bewailing its assumed degradation, that we have authors who can produce so sterling a work as "Masks and Faces," and actors who can represent it as do the company at the Prince of Wales's.

The historical celebrity of the characters lends a charm to the play which clings to it throughout, and from the first scene to the last we are conscious of a feeling of sympathy with the dramatic persons as with old friends. Who has not read of Peg Woffington, the actress, of Colley Cibber, the Post Laureate and mutilator of Shakespeare? At the very mention of the names of Kitty Clive and Mr. Quin what a host of book-memories arise! We know them, and recognize them when they enter the stage as old friends, and the feeling of familiarity is heightened by the careful dressing of the parts; which in every case was beyond all praise. An actor can scarcely give too great attention to this important element of success; and to our mind a man will walk like, talk like, and act like the character he assumes when he is dressed like it. Mr. Teeddale could not sit for James Quin and Mr. Wood for Colley Cibber, and the artist need not go much out of his way to turn out portraits which might well pass for the great originals themselves.

Here is a slight outline of the plot, and the reader will at once see what opportunities there are in "Masks and Faces" for the polished acting which Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft's company are well able to bestow on it.

The first scene is the Green Room of old Covent Garden Theatre, in which Mr. Quin, the great actor, and Mistress Kitty Clive are discovered seated at the opposite sides of a table, reading their particular newspapers. Miss Kitty Clive's contains a sarcastic and bitter notice of Mr. Quin's acting and Mr. Quin's one equally bitter of Mistress Clive's. While they are discussing these criticisms with mingled flattery, abuse and acrimony, and are approaching one of their usual quarrels, enter Ernest Vane and Sir Charles Pomander. They are friends and men of the world, of that world which in their day was especially licentious, luxurious and openly unscrupulous. Mutual confidences reveal Ernest Vane's love for Mistress Peg Woffington, the famous actress, to whom Sir Charles Pomander himself has addressed an offer of an establishment, carriage, footmen, liberal pin-money—and his heart. Ernest Vane tells him that he will not succeed; the libertine is quite confident that he will, and mentions that he will not particularly care if he should fail, as he has seen another pretty face belonging to a lady whom he assisted but yesterday morning out of an overturned coach.

Then enters one of the most interesting characters in the comedy—Triple, the author and artist, very thin and hungry-looking, very humble, yet a gentleman every inch of him from his feet, clad in thin, worn shoes, to his frayed and seedy hat.

He has left three tragedies for the consideration of the manager, and he carries under his arm a half-finished portrait of Peg Woffington, which he has painted from memory. Managers will not play Mr. Triple's tragedies, the public will not buy his pictures, and there are at home in the miserable garret a wife and two children starving.

But Triple is confident and sanguine, for he has been told that something lies waiting for him in the Green Room of Covent Garden, and he considers that it must be a letter, perhaps enclosing a cheque,

from the manager accepting one or all of his tragedies. The parcel is brought to him: there is no letter; but there are his tragedies, and they are declined. Triplet's anguish and disappointment are heart-rending to behold, and the quiet, natural way in which Mr. Bancroft portrayed the utter misery and despair of the disappointed man has raised him to a high rank indeed. Hitherto Mr. Bancroft has confined his powers to assumptions of the "swell" order of humanity, and has represented the class well, but he need do so no longer, for the thrill of sympathy and quick appreciation that ran through the house at his gestures and expression as he bent over the parcel of his returned tragedies is the recognition of higher powers than he has hitherto manifested.

To Triplet, in the midst of his despair, enters Peg Woffington, the open-handed, incorruptible actress. She recognizes him as an old friend, who in the days of her poverty, when she sold oranges at Goodman's Fields, used to bestow on her many a kindly pat of the head and welcome sixpence, and she declares that she will make Rich, the manager, read the three tragedies, that she will sit for the completion of her portrait, and that Triplet shall be made happy. In this scene is an admirable piece of acting, as true as it is polished, wherein Peg Woffington reads Sir Charles Pomander's insulting letter aloud to him, and with marvellous coolness rejects his offer; she is so accustomed to such offers that she has grown to forget they are insults!

Sir Charles, chagrined and vengeful, leaves her, and Ernest Vane takes his place. Peg Woffington loves Ernest Vane with that depth and tenderness of passion which only a woman of genius is capable of. Upon his breast she reveals her heart, so naively and charmingly that one is inclined to consider Ernest Vane cold-hearted that he can stand silent and motionless. There is evident in his face and attitude a hidden feeling, an uneasiness, which is afterwards fully accounted for.

He commences to make some confession, but she will not hear it. If he has loved before let him conceal it from her, for her love is so great, so jealous, that she could not bear the confession. So Ernest Vane's lips are closed on that subject, and, embracing the charming, tender-hearted Peg Woffington, he turns in time to invite Sir Charles, Colley Cibber, Mr. Quin, Kitty Clive, and Snarl and Soapes the critics, to sup at his house that same evening. They accept—Sir Charles after some hesitation—and the stage is cleared of all save the baronet, who is dying for revenge. The opportunity for the display of his powers as a strategist immediately occurs by the entrance of his confidential servant, who tells him that the lady of the overturned carriage, whom he had been sent to watch, turned out to be Mistress Ernest Vane, on her way to her husband's town-house, which she expected to reach that night.

Here is an opportunity for revenge, indeed! Ernest Vane, the successful suitor for Peg Woffington's hand, married already and his wife to arrive on the evening of the supper which is to celebrate the betrothal of her husband to an actress! Sir Charles Pomander sees his way to a savage and complete revenge, and, telling his servant that he is to communicate with him immediately Mrs. Vane arrives, he goes off, exulting in anticipations of his triumph.

In the next scene we see Ernest Vane's elegantly furnished drawing-room. These are real tapestry on the walls, fine old plate on the sideboards, genuine antique furniture and bric-à-brac. No expense is spared in the mounting of the scene, and, as usual, the manager was triumphant. The room is just what it ought to be, from its real tapestry to the hangings of the open window.

Here enters Mabel Vane, all anxiety to see her husband, whom she dearly loves, and to whom she intends giving a pleasant surprise. He does not expect her for some two hours. She has arrived purposely before that time because, as she says with a charming naïveté, all pleasures are heightened when unexpected.

She goes to her husband's room to change her travelling clothes, and Sir Charles Pomander's servant arrives to tell his master that he has run the "hare to cover," and that she is in the adjoining room.

Sir Charles is delighted; and presently the room is filled with the company.

They all take their seats and a cup of tea. Conversation progresses brilliantly, during which Colley Cibber says that Ernest Vane goes the pace, but was outstripped by the former occupant of the room, who, while he entertained one mistress, would have another concealed in the next room. There is a

laugh and a "Fie, fie!" in the midst of which Sir Charles Pomander offers to wager that Ernest is quite as much a man of the world as the former tenant, and that there is at that moment a lady concealed in the next room!

Ernest Vane rises angrily, and a quarrel is only prevented by Peg Woffington rising and opening the door, when Mabel is discovered and led in.

She flies to her husband's heart, with all the artlessness of trusting love. There is a deadly, solemn silence, and a threatened fiasco, which Peg Woffington averts by introducing herself and friends as ladies and gentlemen of title.

So Sir Charles's anticipated triumph is balked for the present. The company disperse, and Sir Charles leaves Mabel while he escorts Peg Woffington—alias Lady Betty Modish!—to her carriage. Mabel left alone, there enters Triplet with a copy of verses, which he has been commissioned to write in praise of Peggy by Peggy herself. In supreme innocence of Mabel's relationship to Ernest Vane, he, while devouring biscuits—some of which he conceals in his pocket for his starving children—reveals the whole affair, and Mabel, at first incredulous, suddenly, while hiding behind the arras, learns the truth from the lips of her husband, who, entering with Peg Woffington, offers passionately to leave home, wife, everything for her. The curtain falls, and Mabel faints in her husband's arms.

In the next scene we see Triplet's miserable home, and Triplet at work writing a comedy—writing a comedy while he and his wife and children are starving!

In a corner stands the now almost finished portrait of Peg Woffington, to which she intends sitting for the last touches to-day, and which the art critics are coming to view. The children are very hungry and very noisy. Triplet cannot work for his misery, and cannot even play a tune on the fiddle, which is in his dark hours sometimes a consolation.

All is misery and despair, when, suddenly there comes, like a flash of sunlight, Peg Woffington—Peg Woffington, with a little black boy carrying a pie and a bottle of Madeira.

What delight there is as that pie is cut, and how the children eat it! How the delight is increased, too, when Peg Woffington, after mending a hole in Triplet's coat, and contriving to conceal a ten-pound note in it when she has done it, when Peg, we say, tucks up her skirts and dances an Irish jig with the children, while papa plays the fiddle!

Then the children are quieted and sent away, and Peg sits for her portrait. But Triplet cannot paint it; how can he, so poor an artist, transfer her lovely, beautiful, sparkling face to the canvas?

No, while she sits weeping and fretting in her misery for the lost Ernest Vane, and has no rest night or day for that love, Triplet, in a fit of despair at his own incapability, dashes the paint-brush in the face of the portrait!

What is to be done? The critics are already on the stairs.

Peg's power of invention is spurred, and answers to the sudden call. She takes a knife from the table and cuts out the whole of the face, then as the critics enter she hides behind the picture, inserts her own pretty face in the aperture, and there is the living portrait.

The critics are Sir Charles Pomander, Colley Cibber, Mr. Quin, and Kitty Clive, with, of course, the professional critics, Messrs. Snarl and Soapes.

Triplet manages to keep them at a safe distance from the picture, and of course the critics find fault with it. Everything is wrong and not a few insulting and spiteful remarks are made on Peg herself by her fellow actors, and in especial her rival Mistress Kitty, all which she amply takes revenge for by coming forward and retaliating. One by one the critics leave, and each has some sarcastic remark addressed to him by Triplet, who, after the pie and the encouragement which Peg Woffington's presence gives him, is bold and properly indignant.

Then enters Mabel Vane. She has come to see the great actress who has won her husband's heart, and to beg her to relinquish it. Mabel quickly divines and understands the noble nature of her unwilling rival, and the two women are soon in each other's arms: Peggy offering to put all things straight if Mabel will but follow her instructions. Sir Charles Pomander is waiting outside in the hope of seeing Mabel. Peggy tosses him a note from the window, written in Mabel's name, saying that she is there without her husband, and Sir Charles hurries up to play his dishonourable part and endeavour to tempt his friend's wife. Instead of Mabel, however, it is Peggy, who in Mabel's cloak and hood, mimics Mabel's country style and accent, and thoroughly deceives Sir Charles. Her scheme is unconsciously aided by Triplet, who fetches Ernest Vane, and the whole ends successfully by Peg's renunciation of Ernest and the mutual reconciliation of husband and

wife. The discomfiture of Sir Charles Pomander is of course most complete, and the curtain drops a Peggy, heart-broken by her noble self-sacrifice, turns to hide her face upon the honest breast of Triplet.

Such is the bare outline of a plot particularly full of incident and cleverly arranged windings.

It was to be expected that as Peg Woffington, the clever actress and noble-hearted woman, Mrs. Bancroft would add another success to her long list of triumphs, but we think that the exquisite pathetic touches with which she endowed the character must have taken all by surprise; certainly there was never a better exponent of the part, and to see Mrs. Bancroft's Peg Woffington is to be taken back to the original herself, as she lived and moved.

The next long score of the performance is made by Miss Ellen Terry, who fits the part of Mabel Vane with a nicety and delicacy equally surprising and delightful. We always thought that, given more physical strength, Miss Ellen Terry would make her mark, and as Mabel Vane she has done so. There is a finish and truth about her impersonation which is worthy of all praise. We congratulate the management of the Prince of Wales's on the really valuable acquisition they have secured in this charming young artiste.

Of Mr. Coghlan's Sir Charles Pomander, it is only necessary to say that it was played with his usual care and judicious restraint. It is a character in which suppression is particularly needful. Mr. Coghlan's Sir Charles is a villain of the polished type, and all his plots and malicious soliloquies are spoken as musically and with as well-bred a tone as if they were drawing-room utterances: it is not until we study the eloquent face and the droop of the eye that we see how cleverly the restraint is made to show up the depth of the character.

Mr. Teesdale and Mr. Wood dressed their characters of Quin and Colley Cibber with careful exactitude, and played with all their usual nice attention to detail. The same may be said of Mr. Archer's assumption of Ernest Vane. It is a character difficult to render, and one that might be made too much of by an inexperienced actor. Let the fickle, weak-minded, but lastly repentant husband be ever so little over-acted, and the picture as a whole would be spoilt. Mr. Archer understands this, and tones down Ernest Vane accordingly.

Miss Brennan was a sufficiently good Kitty Clive, and the rest of the parts—especially those of Triplet's children—were well filled.

Mrs. Bancroft prints at the bottom of her programme a civil request that the audience will remain at the end of the play seated until the curtain falls. Were we the manager of a theatre which so ardently strives to place before its supporters good and sound works of art, and were so insulted by the nightly interruption produced by a score or so of underbred persons rising three or four minutes before the fall of the curtain, we should adopt severer language and more effectual means for the enforcement of our wish.

Often have we felt annoyed, enraged and indignant by the sudden fluster and flurry of the impertinent individuals who immediately they see an indication of the close of the play, rise and hurry on their hats and cloaks as if they had not a moment longer to waste upon an entertainment which perhaps has taxed the energies and genius of men and women far better bred and educated than themselves.

If the civil request is not complied with, and you are still insulted, shut the doors, Mrs. Bancroft, and keep them shut until the curtain falls. With a senseless ignorance, those same individuals lose, by their persistence in the foolish habit, one of the finest touches in the play. For Peg's face and attitude as she turns to Triplet, her one friend left, are a study for a poet and an artist.

A FEW days ago an inhabitant of Corbeil presented himself at the Villa Montmorency at Auteuil, the residence of a retired dealer in second-hand furniture, and asked him if he remembered having at a public sale in 1867 bought a bureau, of which he gave an accurate description, informing the late merchant that the bureau had been the property of his father, and that he desired to buy it back again. The ex-dealer replied that he had such a bureau in his possession still, and, taking him into the adjoining room, showed him the piece of furniture he was in quest of. M. Barthe told his visitor that as he wished to gain possession of the bureau because it had belonged to his father, he might have it back if he would replace it by another one, as it was very useful to him. Two hours later a new bureau was brought to M. Barthe, and the old one was carried off to Corbeil. The bureau contained a secret compartment, in which was found a sum of 10,000 francs in gold, in rolls, wedged in with paper outtings.

His Royal Highness Prince Leopold, senior warden of the Apollo University Lodge, Oxford, was on

Wednesday the 1st inst., elected to succeed the Rev. H. A. Pickard, M.A., of Christ Church, the past provincial senior warden of Oxfordshire, as worshipful master of the Apollo. His Royal Highness, who has been unremitting in his attendance at lodge meetings since he has been warden, has consented to accept the important office which has just been conferred upon him.

It is feared that it will be impossible to complete the new National Opera House on the Embankment in time for the next London season.

They have actually hung up in the British Museum a chart of Captain Webb's course across the Channel; and yet they complain there bitterly of want of room. They will next find space for a map of the route taken by the bicycle riders from Paris to Vienna.

MORE than 8,000 cubic metres of ice were daily extracted from the great lake of the Bois de Boulogne during the continuation of the frost. All this ice is absorbed during the summer, and in years when there is little or no frost the parveyors are sometimes placed in extreme difficulties to procure a sufficiency to supply the public demand.

HOW TO SWEET A ROOM.—An uninstructed servant armed with a broom is about as charming an occupant of a parlour or a library well stocked with the pretty little knickknacks which cultivated people like to have about them as the celebrated bull in the china shop. Before her entrance, all fragile movables should be stored by careful hands in some neighbouring closet, and the furniture, as far as possible, protected by covers and slight draperies, kept for the purpose. Then, after doors have been closed and windows opened, she may be called in and instructed.

AMUSEMENTS.—Here is a new way of spending the long winter evenings when home amusement of some kind is in demand. After you've all tired of talking try "blowing cotton" for a little fun. Let as many as may sit around a table, with hands folded and arms extended along the edge of the table, each person touching elbows with his neighbour on each side of him. Take a small piece of common cotton batting picked up to be as light and airy as possible. Put this in the centre of the table. Let some one count one, two, three, and then let each one blow his best to keep the cotton away from himself and drive it upon some one else. The person upon whom it alights must pay a forfeit. No one must take up his arm to escape the cotton. When it alights take it up and start anew. It will be a sober set indeed who can play two or three rounds without indulging in merriment.

HE LOVES ME: HE LOVES ME NOT.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Maurice Durant," "Fickle Fortune," "The Gipsy Peer," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXXV.

It was one of those warm summer nights which are visited at uncertain intervals by the light zephyr breeze which gives warning of a colder season and seems to whisper:

"Enjoy the calm, lazy heat while you may; Autumn is near, Winter is approaching."

On the balcony of the upper room of the Palace of the Doges sat a woman who seemed quite heedless of the breeze's warning as she reclined on a soft couch over which had been spread a tiger's skin, and fanned her clear cheeks, flushed slightly with the heat and the inward turmoil of her restless mind, with a delicate fan of Genoese work.

Very beautiful, and bewitching, and enticing she looked, her finely turned neck bare, her head with its golden sheen turned downwards, her eyes, clear, sharp and watchful, fixed on the gondolas which flitted on the canal below—very beautiful, but very dangerous.

Looking at her, one would be reminded of the tigress, sleepy and comfortable, but still with an eye to the children playing behind her favourite rock. The children are safe while the tigress sleeps with a full stomach, but when she will wake, hungry and alert, how then?

Beside the couch was thrown a pile of velvet and silken clothes, and on them rested another figure; this, a man pale and wan from long sickness.

He looks anything but dangerous, and there is just enough light from the shaded lamp within the room to show that his face is anything but a happy or a satisfied one.

He looks, dreamily below and seems lost in thought.

Presently this lady—no other than Selina Armitage—

—turns her head and as her eyes read the nurse in his face her own winces, as if with a sharp pain.

"I thought you were asleep," she said, bending towards him and speaking in a soft, soothing voice, which, though it would have charmed many men out of their seven senses, somehow irritated the man at her feet. "I thought you were asleep, so I would not move."

"No, I am not asleep," said Edgar Raven, with a half sigh, but a smile as he looked up at her. "I was thinking!"

"Thinking," she repeated, "the very thing the doctor forbade!"

"Can Doctor Antonio minister to a mind diseased?" said Edgar, with a wan smile. "I must think."

"A penny for your thoughts," she retorted, softly, looking down at him with a look which no man—but him—could resist.

"You shall have them for nothing," he replied, raising his head and looking moodily up at her. "First, they were full of gratitude to you, who have been so kind, so marginally kind to me—why or wherefore save for that love of charity for which alone which fills the heart of some good women—I know not. It is strange that you should have made so great a sacrifice of your time, of your health—for you are paler than when you first came—and stranger still that I should permit it as a matter of course! Is my weakness to blame?"

She shook her head. "No, because you are so gentle and considerate that you, knowing how I delight in being of even small service to you, allow me to be near you—that is all!"

He sighed. "I cannot understand it," he said. "I cannot try, for when I do try my brain spins; one thing chases and gets mingled with another in wild confusion, and all is chaos. How came it that I am lying here like a stricken hound, and that you, beautiful Miss Armitage, a lady of position, of the world, have descended from your place in society to sit here by a weak, peevish sick man, and nurse him like a paid hospital drudge?"

She turned her face away. "Another did it," she murmured, her face paling. "You did not wonder then?"

His face flushed, and he raised himself higher and nearer to her.

"Ah, that is it! Miss Armitage, if you would know whether my thoughts tend day and night, it is to that other. I think, think, think of her, and can think of no one else. It is for that reason, that I cannot appreciate or thank you enough. If the world fell and the waters rose, I should take it all as a matter of course, so absorbed am I, in my weak state, in that one other. Miss Armitage, you promised, with your eyes and manner if not by words, that you would explain her sudden disappearance and long absence. It cannot be true that she has left me altogether?"

Selina Armitage turned her face farther from him and sighed deeply.

His face paled and flushed by turns. "Is my suspicion, my fear true? You told me—the doctor and you—that she had gone for rest and fresh air, and Heaven knows, I was glad to hear it; but—but there has been no letter, no message. She does not come back. How am I to reconcile her absence, her silence, with her love for me?"

He dropped down again as he spoke, with lowered voice, but kept his eyes fixed upon the averted face of his companion with feverish watchfulness and eagerness.

"Why do you remain silent?" he exclaimed, at last, drawn into a passionate entreaty by her silence. "Why do you not speak? You have been as kind and gentle to me as a sister. If you know that any information which would set my mind at rest on this point would tend more to my recovery than anything man or woman could do you would tell me all. When is Miss Temple coming back?"

"Never!" said Selina, looking down at him sadly and bending forward, as if she would soften the blow which she deemed it wiser to deal swiftly and surely.

"Never!" he echoed, after a moment's silence, in which she could read upon his face the amazement and despair which her words had produced in his heart; "never!"

"Never!" said Selina, with a sigh. "Can you forgive me for keeping the truth from you?"

Edgar did not answer, but in his eyes there was a look as if he had said that he could not forgive her.

"I did it for the best," murmured Selina, covering her fair face with her exquisitely shaped hands. "I did it for the best! I know that you were not strong enough to bear any surprise or sudden change. The doctor said so. She herself bade me keep it from you until you were stronger."

"She!" he echoed, and his voice sounded hoarse and full of a dull anguish. "You mean Valeria Temple, the woman I love! Speak plainly—let there be no more concealment, no half-confidences! You mean that Valeria Temple has gone. Now tell me plainly—reserving, concealing nothing—why?"

"Can you not guess?" murmured Selina. "Guess!" he retorted, with mad impatience. "I do not want to guess. I have done with guessing and uncertainty. Tell me all—I say!"

"Valeria Temple left you because she did not love you!"

"Did—not—love—me?" he repeated, slowly, fixing his dark, hollow eyes upon her face, which was uncovered now, and pale and full of sweet sympathy and reluctance.

A smile, stern and incredulous, bent his pale lips. "She did love me. Her own lips declared it."

"Then why did she leave you?"

The question, put so softly, sadly and so tenderly, sent him back to his pillow again, subdued, bewildered, almost half-credulous.

"Do you think it is agreeable to me to have to tell you this?" went on the soft voice, close above him now, with a pair of tender eyes looking down into his. "Do you not think that I would give the world, my life, if this task could be put away from me? But it cannot. You ask me to tell you the truth; I do so. Would that the story could come from other lips than mine! But I will not shrink. If it is anguish for me to undeceive you it is anguish or me to know that you are undeceived—and you have been deceived, bitterly deceived! There was some heart left in her who thus—perhaps unwillingly—misled you; and at last that heart moved her to the right course. She went, and left me, charged me—to tell you that she had gone—"

"Gone!" he repeated, in a hollow voice, as if to himself.

"Gone for ever—for ever! that you would never see her face again, and charged me to pray you to forget and forgive her."

A hostman below sang out the chorus of a drinking song, a bird lit on the balcony and travelled to the stairs—an hour seemed to pass in the silent pause, during which the whole world seemed to slip and slide away and leave him unmanned, broken-hearted, a prey to despair.

"And you—you—how came you to know?" he said, in a smothered voice, his head turned away from her, thus making her task easier, for while his dark, questioning eyes were upon her her spirit quailed, bold and daring as it was.

"She sent for me. She knew that I was here, in Venice, and she sent for me. We were old friends, remember. It was at our house that you first met her, and naturally—"

He put up his hand for her to pause a moment, then he nodded, and, in a low voice, said:

"Go on!"

"I came at once and she told me all. You knew that she was living under a feigned name. I did not know that it was her—Valeria Temple—when I came. I am glad I did though, it has brought much pain to me, Heaven knows and Heaven only knows! She told me all and bade me tell you what I have told you."

"That she left me because she had deceived me, because she did not love me, but loved some one else?" he said.

The skilled actress hid her face in her hands and remained silent.

Then, with a sudden sob, she bent over him, and laid one of her soft hands upon his.

"You will forgive her," she moaned; "but will you forgive me?"

"Forgive you!" he said, turning and laying his other hand in hers, at which touch of kindness, simple and mechanical as it was, her heart leapt. "I have only thanks and gratitude for you—you have played the true friend's part, and saved me from farther deceit and betrayal. I have nothing but thanks for you, nothing but thanks!"

He pressed her hand, and she withdrew it.

But she still bent over him as she murmured:

"I do not want thanks; it will be enough for me if you will be brave and strong. I should die!" she exclaimed, with tightened lips. "If it could be seen that you gave way, disappointed and grieved by such deceit, you must be—"

"Deceit!" he exclaimed, and she saw she had gone a little too far—"deceit! The deceit was mine and self-inflicted! She meant none, I have a firm faith in that. No, do not let us speak of deceit!"

"We will not then," she said. "But you will be brave and show the world that there is too much of the man in you to allow of useless grief. Why should you wear your heart upon your sleeve for days to peek at? Ah, no! In a week or so you will be strong and about in the world again, and I—I—shall be far away, but always near you in thought—"

She paused, moved beyond words, and turned her face away.

He had listened to her half-unconsciously, scarcely grasping her words or their meaning, but when the low, hurried whisper was broken, he looked up, and a light seemed to break in upon his bewildered, struggling senses.

Why had she—this young, beautiful girl—done all this for him? watching him night and day, and lingered by his side to break the news of his desertion to him—break it and soothe him in his disappointment and misery?

Why? Could it be because she loved him?

What did her tender looks, her broken words, her sighs, and, above all, the gentle smile with which she looked at him, mean, if not that she loved him?

He raised himself painfully, and stood beside her on the balcony, leaning against it from sheer weakness, and looked down at her.

"You are right," he said, "I shall be strong in a little while. There is no courage required to bear so light a blow as this. Women are fickle and mysterious and changeable as the wind. You—you of all women I have known have been a true friend. She who has left me could sit beside my bed and nurse my sick body; but you have done more, for you have ministered to my sick, miserable mind. A veil has fallen from my eyes and I see clearly how great, how noble a nature is yours. With you by his side a man could face the world and play his part in it as becomes a man. Can you find anything kinder than contempt for a man who has wasted the best years of his life in a Will-o'-the-Wisp chase? Will you stoop to accept the awe and admiration which such a man could offer you? If you are as gentle and tender-souled as you are noble, you may find it in your heart to do so. Heaven grant, for my sake, that you may, for here I lay at your feet those dregs of a wasted life and the revelation to rise above the past to a more honourable future. Will you accept me? I honour you, Miss Armitage, I love you!"

He took her hand and pressed a kiss upon it, and she turned her face up to him with all the passion in her soul burning upon it.

It had come at last! Through a maze of trickery and deceit she had fought her way, she had waded up to her delicate neck in falsehood and at last had triumphed! He loved her! His lips, his eyes said it.

She could have swooned for joy; she sat stupefied by the vast vision of happiness which rose before her eyes as his words breathed low upon the air, smote her ear.

"I love you!" Oh joy! Let come what would she had won him—he was hers.

"Are you sure?" she breathed. "Are you sure? You are suffering now from wounded respect, from a heavy blow! It is the recoil, the rebound that has sent your desire towards me! Oh, be sure, be sure, before you offer me what—what—I prize more than life!"

"I am sure!" he repeated, in a hollow voice. "The veil is lifted from my eyes and I see now how mad, how foolish I have been. I love you, Selina. I believe that I have loved you long, though this miserable passion took possession of me and tripped things out of their shape! Do not refuse to accept my love, for I shall never change again. Take me now and I am yours, heart and soul, for ever."

"For ever!" she echoed. "For ever! I do take you, Edgar Raven, for I love you, I have loved you, ah, so dearly—so dearly, long, long ago!"

Who could resist so beautiful a face, so sweet a voice?

He took the golden head and nestled it against his aching heart.

The shadows of his bitter grief moved thickly about him, and he saw his life, as through a glass, darkly.

He bent his head, and kissed her.

They were plighted as man and wife!

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE days glided on, and, as Selina Armitage had prophesied, Edgar Raven gained strength.

He still puzzled Doctor Antonio, however, for in all this worthy doctor's experience, and his practice had been a good one, he had never met with a case in which the consequences of a pistol-shot had taken so singular a shape.

Edgar Raven grew stronger, but there was something clinging to him that kept him back in mental health, and prevented him from getting any flesh on his bones.

The good doctor would often half-laughingly, half with annoyance twit his patient upon his leanness, and Edgar would as often reply, with a smile:

"I'm fat enough, doctor; you forget how long you kept me on gruel and beef-tee."

"Well, well, we'll do so no longer," said Doctor Antonio, "and I order chickens, beef, mutton, anything you like—but the mahl-stick, I'll have no work yet awhile. Go about in your gondola, give a ball, or accept invitations to some—get tipsey, if you like, only get out of this state of ennui and listlessness, and I don't care what you do."

Whereat Edgar would always laughingly retort that he had always been a lazy man, and he should continue so all his life through, let Doctor Antonio or any other doctor say what he would.

But the listless dislike to any exertion did not show signs of decrease, and the doctor at last said that his patient must leave Venice and return to England.

But this Edgar quietly refused to do; he was possessed of a great repugnance to his native land, and absolutely refused to leave Italy.

Selina, who had taken some rooms with her mother near by, saw with hourly misery that the wound which she had, with her own hands inflicted upon the heart of the man she loved better than she loved all else was still open, and daily she felt that anguish which those feel who find their efforts to draw the object of their love nearer to them repelled and refused.

She left no means of moving him from his constant brooding on the past untried. She would sing, as only she could sing—winningly, softly—but her voice only recalled to him that other one which he should never hear more. She would talk to him of the future in strains ravishing enough for the Sirens, but he could look upon no future in which Valeria had no place.

The past was always avoided by both of them, so that Selina had never heard how and why he had come by the wound which had so nearly proved his death.

With her too there lived an hourly dread of exposure. Something might occur to show him how he had been deceived.

She writhed in terror at the mere idea of Valeria's returning.

Simple Doctor Antonio, who had accepted her explanation of matters without a question, was an object of dread to her.

Might he not open up the subject of Valeria's sudden disappearance with Edgar, of an explanation ensuing and of her own ruin and disgrace as the result?

If she could have killed Valeria, the doctor—all or any one who stood in her way or made that way perilous—she would have done it, so madly, so passionately did she love the man she had so cunningly deceived.

But murder, secret and wholesale, is not to be done even in Venice with safety, and Selina had to endure the agony of the doctor's daily presence and her own guilty dread of exposure.

Edgar got no better, as far as the listlessness and want of appetite were concerned, and at last laughingly prescribed for himself.

"What I want is a little work, my dear Antonio," he said. "Let me get back to my old easel and I shall soon make flesh for myself as well as my painted gods and goddesses. Work is what I want. What do you say, Selina?"

She said no words, but smiled up at him and left the room.

Next morning when he entered the studio his easel, with a clean canvas, was standing near the window, his colours and brushes on a table by its side, and his mahl-stick and palette ready to his hand.

He sighed as he looked around the neatly arranged room, where in every corner there was some trace of a woman's tender thoughtfulness, and his face drooped.

"She is always thinking of me, she lives for me, and I—I cannot love her. Oh, what a base, ungrateful heart I've got! But I do not, I cannot love her as I ought!"

Selina stole in as he spoke and, gliding up to him, laid her hand on his shoulder.

"Will you be happy now, sir?" she whispered, with a winning smile.

He put the veil away from her face—she was always heavily veiled when out of the house—and kissed her.

"I am always happy," he said, "when you are near. Who could be otherwise? It was like your tender heart to get all these ready for me, and I am very grateful."

"There should be no such word as gratitude between those who love," she murmured. "I am yours, my whole life is yours. How can I help thinking of you? what else have I to do?"

He kissed her again and turned to his easel. Alas, it was too true. She loved him with all her being, and he—He smothered a sigh and went on with his work.

For a brief space in midday she succeeded in

drawing him away to the pretence of the meal, which he toyed restlessly with; but that over he returned to his easel and worked with an absorption which might be highly beneficial or highly dangerous to one in his peculiar state of health.

Towards twilight he dropped the mahl-stick, and, with a sigh, wheeled the easel from the window.

All day he had scarcely spoken to her, and now she stood ready to go he seemed to have forgotten her.

"I am going now," she said. "You will not work to-night again, or to-morrow until I come?"

"No," he said, absently, "oh, no, I will be very good. I feel better already. I shall be able to eat a steak and thrash a man in a week from now, so let all Venice and the butchers take care. And must you go?"

"Yes," she murmured, "it is my usual hour. I have closed the window; you will not sit there?"

"No," he laughed. "You are as anxious as if I were still on the brink of the unknown world. No, I'll take care of the draughts, smoke only one cigar and get early to bed. Be a good boy altogether, in fact."

She passed down the stairs, closely veiled, to reach the gondola in which Mrs. Armitage was waiting for her.

As her feet touched the last step the figure of a man, deeply cloaked and masked, stepped from out of the shadow, and touched her arm.

She started, but she was not the woman to scream.

The man laid his finger to his lip and motioned for her to follow him to the space beneath the stair, where they would be safe from observation.

For a moment she hesitated, then she looked at the figure with deep scrutiny and motioned to him to lead on.

When they had gained the recess he drew his cloak still farther across his face, and putting his lips to her ears, whispered:

"Lady Florice, I know you!"

Selina Armitage paused and bent a searching penetrating gaze from the corners of her hard eyes while she drew her veil more securely over her face and remained silent.

"I know you; all denial or prevarication is useless. Remember the letter, the duel, and its consequences. I am he who wrote to you. Do not speak—one word of alarm or for help, and I plunge this dagger in your heart! By so doing I should at once gain my end; but, Lady Florice, though I am a desperate man I would not shed blood if other means were possible to the attainment of my end. It is for you to say whether other means shall serve, Lady Florice, you love Edgar Raven! Don't deny it; I know it, Edgar Raven is in my power—it is scarcely necessary, there is no time to explain how and wherefore. I will exercise that power to utterly ruin him, to pluck him from you for ever, unless you comply with a request which I will put to you—unless you comply with my demands."

Selina did not speak, but by a gesture she intimated that he was to proceed.

"These demands are none other than that you make over to me, your cousin, Lord Horace Ellsmere, the whole of the Ellsmere estates excepting three thousand a year. I leave that to you, and it is more than you have spent these four years past. Refuse my demand at your and Edgar Raven's peril. You will not? Why should you? The estate is of no use to you; you do not use it, he does not know that you possess it. Let him still think you Valeria Temple or the Signora Flori. Oh, you start!"

For Selina Armitage had started at the sudden light which those words had let in upon her.

"You do not refuse. I knew it. You will make over the whole to me, excepting the three thousand, and you will remain contented as Valeria Temple, the wife of Edgar Raven! If you refuse I let the sword fall which hangs over the head of Edgar Raven and he is a dead man! But, no, you cannot refuse, Lady Florice Ellsmere will not refuse so small a price for her love as the estates which she never valued or cared to win!"

"No, she will not!" said Selina, suddenly pushing her veil aside and looking full upon her old master and tyrant with flashing, scornful eyes.

Lord Ellsmere bent back and dropped his cloak, while his hand drew the dagger from its sheath with a sharp click.

"Selina!" he exclaimed.

"Ay!" she retorted, full of deep scorn. "Put that toy up; you dare not use it! Would that you could, that I may be the means of your doing one good action in ridding the world of me. Put it up; I laugh at it and you. Idiot! the house is guarded by the man Fidolio, and a shriek from me would bring instant destruction upon you."

Lord Ellsmere dropped the dagger into its place and muttered beneath his breath, while his eye



EDITH OF THE CLIFF; OR, THE SMUGGLER.

CHAPTER III.

AFTER Manfred was seated at the table the lightkeeper paced several times to and fro, his head bent in deep thought. Finally he stopped, and addressed his guest.

"Good Manfred, you will remain with me to-night."

"I can do so. In truth, Donald, it would please me so to do."

"Then you can spare me for a short space now. I have an errand to do at the Castle."

"Go at once and do it; the Queen of May will entertain me until you return."

Without farther remark, Donald put on his hat and went out. It was dark when he reached the Castle, and he at once inquired for the steward. After waiting awhile he was conducted to the library, where he found Moncton making himself quite at home over a bottle of wine and a pipe, in that superbly decorated apartment.

"Well, Donald," said the steward, after the lightkeeper had taken a seat, "what can I do for you?"

Donald reflected a few minutes, and then answered:

"I know not master, if my visit will be agreeable or no, but I felt it my duty to come to you, as something has transpired which I am sure in unknown to you."

"Be not afraid to speak out, my friend, for surely there can have been no wrong on your part."

"Not on my part, master. I have to tell you of something that your son has done."

"What has the rascal been up to now?"

"In truth, Moncton, he has been asking Edith to be his wife."

The steward laughed outright.

"Well, upon my soul!" he cried, "the young dog is in a hurry."

The lightkeeper had looked to see the steward fly into a passion, and his burst of merriment amazed him.

"He cannot have thus approached the child with your consent, Master Moncton."

"Whom do you call a child?"

[EDITH TELLS THE WARLOCK HER STORY.]

"Edith."

"Why, bless me, man! she is a woman, and one among ten thousand. Do you think I have had her under my eye all these years without having discovered her true character? Where in the kingdom could my boy find a better wife?"

The lightkeeper was completely taken aback. He knew that Richard Moncton could if he would marry a wealthy wife.

"Surely, Donald, you could not object to bestowing Edith's hand upon my son?"

Donald Robinson recovered himself. It was a marvel to him, but he was gaining the information he sought.

"I have nothing to do with the bestowing or withholding the hand of Edith," he said. "She is her own mistress and will do as seemeth to her best. I only wished to know if it was with your consent that Master Richard offered himself as her husband."

"Let your mind be at rest on that score, Donald."

It is with my full and free consent, Donald. You may wonder at this, and yet if you give me credit for a moderate portion of common-sense you will find nothing in it to wonder at at all. Richard does not need more money. Remember, he is my only child, and I can make him rich. And then again, he has money enough of his own. What my boy wants is a wife, faithful, loving and true, and Edith of the Cliff is the one woman to make him happy. The boy loves her to distraction, and he will make her happy too. Surely, Donald, you will not throw any obstacle in the way?"

"No!" said the lightkeeper, slowly and thoughtfully. "I shall offer no impediment; only I shall leave Edith free to act her own pleasure. She is not to be worried."

"She is to be loved and wooed and won, my old friend; talk not of worrying."

Donald was not in the mood for farther converse with the steward, and, as soon as he could do so decently, he took his leave.

"With my full and free consent," said Moncton, as Donald reached the door. "And when Edith is Richard's wife she will have to come into a family next in power in Arnciff to that of the earl."

The lightkeeper bowed and departed.

At the cot Edith and the warlock were entertaining one another.

The maiden not only remembered and respected the man, but she found a charm in his conversation and in his companionship for which it might have been difficult to account. This being the case, it was an easy matter for Manfred to lead her to speak of herself.

Gradually approaching the subject, he at length asked her why she had never taken the name of her old protector and guardian.

"I am sometimes called by his name," she answered, "though I never assumed it. You know how I came here."

"I have heard—in fact I was in this region at the time. Yet, my dear child, I would like to hear the story from your own lips as you understand it."

"It is very simple," she said, "and no secret, though it is quite recently I have known all. I say it is simple, I mean the bare story. Behind that, into the source and cause of those events which make up the story, is mystery enough, a mystery which we may never penetrate or solve."

"My dear child," interrupted the warlock, with a gentle raising of his hand, "if there is mystery refer it to me. Of late I have been more or less tempted to set aside for the rest of my days this character of soothsayer and wizard. I am coming to shrink from the oftentimes uncomfortable notoriety attaching to it, yet for your sake I will exercise my skill, and I need not assure you that when I speak it shall be the words of sober truth."

"Oh, thank you, good Manfred," cried the girl, gratefully. "I shall trust you, I cannot help trusting you. If you yourself were my own father I could not love and respect you more than I do."

The warlock started as if touched by a sudden thrill that had shot to his heart.

"Heaven bless you, child!" he finally said, with much emotion. "Your love to me is like the gentle breath of springtime to the dying oak. From the gnarled and twisted branches the foliage of renewed life once more puts forth. And now, Edith, tell me what you know of the past."

"All that I know and all that Donald knows is this! On a certain dark night, eighteen years ago, a woman found her way up the cliff to this cot, with an infant of two years in her arms. She was wild and frightened, and seemed to fancy she was being hunted by wicked men for the lives of herself and child. Donald and his wife took her in and made her as comfortable as they could. The Arnciff physician was called, and he found the woman a raving maniac, not raving with madness but raving of the mortal danger that threatened herself and child. She would not give her name. She only spoke one name, and that was the name of her child, Edith. The physician, after remaining with her some hours, decided that her mania had been of recent origin and had been caused by recent fright. On his second visit he found the woman sinking, and he said to the lightkeeper's wife, 'This poor woman cannot live;

find out her secret before her lips are sealed if you can."

"But her secret was never told. Only once did she speak in answer to Dame Murchinson's persistent inquiries, and then only to make a request, or rather to give a command. She bade the good couple that her child should never be called by any other name than Edith. I was the child; so came my name of 'Edith of the Cliff,' for Donald would not disobey the injunction of the dying woman, and yet it was necessary that I should be distinguished from other Ediths in Arnciff. My mother—for touching that matter there could be no mistake, the old physician gave particular attention to it, and declared that the laws and impulses of maternity governed the woman's every word and act and look towards the child, and not only this, but the family resemblance between the two was too striking to be mistaken—my mother lived just one week, and then fell softly to sleep. From that day Donald Murchinson has been a father to me, and his good wife was a true and tender mother while she lived."

Edith wiped the gathering tears from her eyes as she ceased speaking, and, after a pause, the warlock asked:

"To what station in life did the physician, or did Donald think your mother belonged?"

"They could not determine. Her dress would seem to indicate she belonged to the lowest order of servants, and the grim upon it was like that of a colliery, but her hands when washed were white and soft, her face was exceedingly fair, and even in her ravine her language was elegant, pure and ornate."

"And did she leave no keepsake, no bit of jewelry, nothing that might have been identified in after times?" asked Manfred.

A faint flush came upon Edith's fair face, and a look half of smiling and half of sadness as she replied:

"Only a red cornelian locket with a gold rim. It looked like a Hindoo amulet."

"Where is it?"

Again the flush, the smile and the sadness.

"I was but a child, not more than nine years of age, and Percival Gray was carrying me upon his shoulders. He was a stout boy then, of fourteen or fifteen, and was Lord Chudleigh. I can remember how my fancy used to run away with me when Dame Murchinson would laugh at the idea of my riding upon the shoulders of a real live lord. Well, one day Percival said he would like the cornelian to wear as a charm upon his watch-chain, and if I would give it to him he would wear it for ever and would buy me something far prettier. I gave it to him gladly, and on the next day he brought me the gold chain which I wore to-day and which has been the envy of half the girls in Arnciff. Only think of it—from Lord Chudleigh! Percival became Lieutenant Gray, then Captain Gray, then Major Gray, and then Colonel Gray, and now he is Earl of Arnciff and the wealthiest nobleman in Devonshire. Does it seem possible that it should be the same bright-faced, laughing Percival who used to play with me in those other years?"

"Perhaps not the same, Edith."

"Ah!" she responded, bowing her head, "not the same! No, no—many years have passed since then. He has risen from rank to rank and from honour to honour. He has become a warrior of fame and renown, and dwelling in the midst of carnage must have hardened him. I don't mean his heart could have become hardened, but he must have lost the old boyish glee and gladness. And now he is lord of Arnciff and an earl. When he comes I shall certainly side by the wayside to have a look at him."

"And," suggested the warlock, with a smile, "you had better ask him for your cornelian locket."

"What? when I gave it to him and he promised to wear it for ever, and I accepted the beautiful gold chain in return? Though he might be willing to give up the locket, I could never give up the chain."

"Well, you could ask him to lend it to you, and then you can let me look at it."

"Why cannot you examine it in his hands?"

"Well thought of, Edith. I will do so."

"And do you really hope to discover anything from the locket?"

"I will tell you truly, my child, that my powers are sometimes wonderful. If I can see the cornelian trinket I have faith to believe that I can read much from it. I know the date of your mother's death, and, once permitted to study the locket which she had worn, I think I shall be able to discover who and what she was. But, my child, you must not be over anxious. Do not excite yourself either with hopeful anticipations or fears. Wait patiently for the earl's return and I will look to the rest."

"But suppose he had lost or—"

"No fear of that," interrupted Manfred, as a foot-fall sounded upon the rock outside. "Soldiers in

India are not apt to part with keepsakes which they have taken with them from home."

While the last words were upon the warlock's lips the door was opened and the lightkeeper entered.

He had evidently walked fast and was much fatigued, and he seemed excited by other causes.

When he was able to speak he turned first to his visitor.

"Manfred, do you know upon what errand I have been to the castle?"

"Edith has told me why she thought you went."

"And she has told you what Richard Moncton said to her?"

"Yes."

"Well, his father not only regards the proposition with favour, but, I believe, he was the originator. He told me as much."

"Peter Moncton chooses me for a daughter-in-law!" cried Edith, breathlessly.

"Yes, my daughter, he does."

And thereupon Donald related as nearly as he could remember, all that passed between the steward and himself.

"Upon my soul," he continued, "it is entirely beyond my comprehension. Turn it which way I will I cannot understand it. It is so marvel to me that Master Richard should have fallen in love with an angel and desired to possess her, but I do marvel that Peter Moncton, proud and avaricious, and vain, should have selected my nameless treasure for his son's wife. Can you see into it, Manfred?"

"I think I can see something," answered the aged seer, slowly and thoughtfully, "but I do not yet see clearly."

"But if you see anything, be it ever so slight, tell me what it is."

The warlock shook his head and smiled.

"You ask too much, Donald. The vague surmises I might give you, though of use to me, could be of no use to you. Leave me to sift it out, and be sure, if it can be done, I will do it."

Then turning to the maiden, who sat pale and trembling, he continued:

"And now what says Edith? Tell me, my child, would you wed with Richard Moncton?"

"I think," she said, with a grave emphasis, which came from the heart, "that I would rather die now in the bright morning than live to be that man's wife. The very thought is dreadful to me."

"Alas!" groaned Donald, "I know not what we shall do. If the steward of Arnciff has a mind to that end, and should use his power, what can avail our opposition in safety?"

"For Edith's sake I will speak. Let come what will from that quarter fear nothing. I could not be the son of my father, nor the descendant of my grandfather without having inherited some of their power, and I might have had much more had I chosen to cultivate and exercise it. As you are perhaps aware, my father left me more than money enough for all my simple wants, so the greed of gain has never been mine. But the power inherited from him still exercises. Not a few of the secrets of Arnciff are known to me, and others I can discover. At all events, fear nothing from the Monctons, but speak not my name to them; you might cripple me if you did so. And now let us turn to a pleasant subject. What is that beautiful yacht-like vessel I saw in the pool this afternoon?"

Donald shut his teeth with a snap and stamped his feet upon the tiles.

"Ah!" cried he, "there, I am sure, is a hold upon both Peter Moncton and his son if we could only get at the bottom of things. That vessel is a smuggler."

"A smuggler!"

"I think so. I do not declare it for certain, but I am morally sure of it."

"Then you think smuggling is carried on here?"

"Think! Ay, I know it, and yet I cannot prove it. If, as I have reason to suspect, Peter Moncton is engaged in the traffic, we can understand how the thing can be kept secret, especially during the utter prostration of the old earl and the absence of the heir. He is really master of Arnciff."

"Well, well," said the warlock, "let the smugglers go for the present. When the young earl comes home, be sure he will make a scattering among the evil crew."

"Ay," responded the lightkeeper, bitterly, "and by that time Peter Moncton will have his nest well feathered."

"Never mind, Donald, so long as he doesn't ornament that nest with the sweet face of your darling pet."

"Oh, Manfred, bless Heaven for your kind assurance. That would indeed be a calamity."

And yet old Donald could not at once break away from the subject of the smugglers. One thing puzzled him sorely; of all the contraband goods which he was sure were landed on the shore of the Pool, he

could not discover whether nor when a single article was taken away.

"They must be removed when you are attending your light."

"Ay; but I should hear them on the road. I tell you, Manfred, it's a puzzle."

"Well, we shall not solve it here in your cot, so let us leave it until we can find a clue."

By-and-bye Donald went out to attend to the lamps in the beacon, which he had lighted before going to the Castle, and shortly afterwards Manfred retired.

On the following morning, when he had eaten his breakfast, the warlock departed.

He went directly to the village, and called at the post-office, where he asked if he could have the privilege of looking at the register of foreign letters posted and received.

The postmaster was a short, stumpy man with a very red face and a very important bearing.

"The business within his majesty's post-office department is strictly private, sir. No one can look at the books."

"But, my good man, I have very particular reasons."

The man in power waved his hand authoritatively.

"No more, sir. You cannot see my books. I trust that is sufficient."

The old man turned away with a flush upon his cheek.

He went to the inn, called the "Avencliff Arms," where he hired a horse and gig to be gone perhaps for a day and a night.

On the following day towards noon Manfred appeared again at the post-office of Arnciff, this time accompanied by a government postal commissioner from Exeter, and the commissioner demanded to be shown the register of foreign letters received at that office.

The little post-master glanced savagely at the white-haired old man, but he dared not disobey his superior.

The register was produced, and the two visitors sat down and looked it over.

Very soon Manfred found what he sought.

Under date of the fourteenth of the last February were recorded three letters received on that day from India, all of them for the Earl of Arnciff.

"Who took these letters from your office?" asked the commissioner.

"All Indian letters for the Castle, sir, are taken by the steward," was the postmaster's reply.

The warlock had nothing more to learn at that time from the Arnciff post-office.

"Well, upon my soul!" muttered the dumpy post-master, as his two visitors departed, "I'd like to know how that old Scotch wizard has got such a hold upon the commissioner."

And he related the circumstances to the pastor and to the village tutor, but they could make no more of it than could he.

CHAPTER IV.

HALF a mile south of the outer cliff was a rocky headland called the "Upper Jaw," and directly south of that was its mate, a promontory in every way similar called the "Lower Jaw," and between these two bold projections of rock was a water passage not more than ten yards wide and perhaps fifty yards long—that is, fifty yards was the length of the passage proper, but beyond that, inland, the way gradually widened until a broad basin was reached, nearly circular in form and half a mile in diameter. This was called "The Pool," and here it was that Donald Murchinson had seen the vessel which had excited in his fanciful mind more than curiosity.

There was no pier or quay on the shores of "The Pool" where a vessel of any size could lay alongside for the purpose of discharging cargo, but there was a landing for boats, very near to which was moored a large, flat-bottomed gondola or barge, such as is generally used for bearing heavy burdens in light draughts of water.

Near the centre of this cliff-locked bay was anchored a brigantine so beautifully proportioned, so fairly rigged and so gracefully riding upon the water that she might have excited the envy of an admiral. Of her well trained and orderly crew we have only to do with the man who, just as the sun was sinking behind the wooded hills, walked up and down the quarter-deck, with a small telescope under his arm.

He was a young man, not more than five or six and twenty, of medium height and possessing a frame of perfect symmetry and great muscular power, combined with an easy, graceful carriage—a carriage and a bearing and a movement as he walked betraying a remarkable degree of manly vigour and self-possession.

His head was covered by a closely-curling crop of mossy, dark brown hair; his eyes were of that deep liquid gray which some people will have to be blue, while the nether features were finely cut and handsome. Take him all in all he was a handsome man, and a student versed in reading character would have unhesitatingly set him down for a strong, bold and courageous man. His skin was dark from exposure to the sun and the storm, and every look and tone, whether in repose or in motion, indicated that he had been used to struggle and conflict, and furthermore the self-satisfied and confident light of those clear gray eyes would seem to indicate that he had been far more used to victory than to defeat. His garb was of the sea, but neat and tidy, not unlike the undress uniform of a naval commander. In fact, he was dressed with scrupulous care from the gold-banded cap to the glossy, low-quartered shoes, with their fluttering bows of black silken ribbon.

Such was the commander of the brigantine, Guy Drummond by name, and this was the first visit of his vessel to the Devonshire cliffs.

"A wonderful place this, captain, for hiding in," remarked one of the subalterns, coming aft from the forecabin, where he had been taking a view of the surroundings.

"Yes," returned the commander, with a nod; "and it is something more than a place to hide in. Not only are our loftiest spars hidden from outside observation by the towering cliffs, but no respectable vessel could thread the rocky intricacies of the narrow pass without an experienced pilot."

"And," suggested the subaltern, "I fancy there are no pilots of that pass in the king's employ."

"No," said Drummond, with a smile. "The cruisers of His Britannic Majesty, I imagine, have never gained entrance to this neck of the Channel."

"Do you expect the barge off to-night, sir?"

"Yes. Mr. Monoton will be on hand as soon as it is fairly dark, and you may see that all is ready for hoisting out. We will not keep him waiting."

The officer withdrew, and Guy Drummond continued his walk, but not for long.

Just as the last golden sunbeam faded from the distant hill-tops a servant came up from the cabin with word that the dinner was ready to be served. Evidently it was not his usual custom to eat dinner so late as this, but with the necessities of his present situation upon him he made his meals a secondary consideration.

"My compliments to Mr. Loftus and Mr. Tower," he said to his servant, "and ask them if they will take dinner with me."

The two invited ones very soon put in an appearance. Harry Loftus was Guy's first lieutenant; a Scotchman by birth, thirty years of age, tall and straight, with sandy hair, and full sandy whiskers; and evidently a man to be trusted in any emergency.

Philip Tower was the second lieutenant, a year younger than Loftus, exceedingly genteel in form and appearance, but a face in which strength and decision of character was plainly manifest.

"Captain," said Loftus, as the servant withdrew from the cabin after having served the wine, "can you tell me how long it is that this old Monoton has managed so long to land contraband goods without having been overhauled by the revenue officers?"

"Not exactly, Loftus, but I hope to ascertain to-night. I mean to know how far he is to be trusted. If I am to venture my goods here, I must know how they are to be disposed of. And I have considerable curiosity, too, for the old man is as secret as the grave concerning his means of transportation on shore."

When the trio returned to the deck it was quite dark. A yard tackle and whip had been rigged, and the main hatch was off.

Shortly afterwards the splash of heavy oars was heard in the water, and ere long the barge was alongside, and Peter Monoton, accompanied by his son, came over the side.

"Now, Captain Drummond," said the steward of Arncliffe, when simple greetings had been exchanged, "suppose we take a look at that French brandy."

"The tobacco will come up first," returned Guy.

"Of course the brandy is all like the sample I have tried?"

"All the goods, sir, are exactly as I have represented."

"Certainly—of course. Bless you! I haven't thought of doubting it."

Lanterns were hung in the hold, and men sent down to hook on the parcels as the tackle-block was lowered.

The first thing up was a box of tobacco, and as it hung for a moment over the hold, in the glare of a lighted ball-eye, Monoton saw that it bore the revenue stamp.

"What is this," he cried, pointing to the stamp.

Drummond smiled and nodded mysteriously.

"It is one of my inventions, Monoton."

"But—it's forgery."

"You think forgery is worse than smuggling?"

"It might be punished more severely, and be more readily detected."

"My good Monoton, you are dull. Once these things are landed, who is to discover any tampering with the stamp and brand of the king's officers? You doubtless can land these things without dangerous observations."

"Yes."

"And you have a safe cover for them on shore?"

"I fancy so."

"Then these revenue stamps should help you. Your customers can handle the goods more freely and openly. I do not propose to do things by halves. You will not have the forgery upon your conscience, and certainly it can trouble you in no other way. If the stamps frighten you, you can obliterate them, or you can leave the goods where they are, and I will run around to the Towers, my men there would be glad of the whole cargo."

"No, no," said the steward, eagerly, "it is all right. Let us have up the tobacco and the brandy, and I think I'll take a few pipes of wine."

"You are the first, Mr. Monoton, and you shall have what you wish. It is my rule never to neglect an opportunity of unloading."

After this the work went on until a dozen large boxes of tobacco, ten pipes of brandy, four pipes of wine, and a few articles of minor importance had been transferred from the brigantine's hold to the barge.

Richard Monoton had kept careful account of the articles as they went over the side, and when the last parcel had been delivered, those interested descended to the cabin, where the steward of Arncliffe paid in bright gold for all that he had received. If he had thought of urging upon Captain Drummond the propriety of deducting somewhat from the price of his ware, a look into the face of the young contrabandist deterred him. It was the face of a man not to be trifled with, the face of a man not easily swayed from a course once adopted.

And, moreover, Peter Monoton had conceived the idea that this youthful hero did not particularly respect him.

However, he could put up with this, seeing that he had made the best bargain with Captain Drummond that he had ever made.

It was near midnight when the barge got away, and when she was well in towards the shore Drummond called away the gig, and in company with Loftus was pulled to the southern shore, where they landed upon the sands.

The coxswain was directed to return to the brigantine, and to keep watch for signals. Three successive flashes of powder from the pan of a pistol was to be the signal for the coming off of the gig.

"I don't know how long we may be gone," the commander said. "If we are ready to come off before daylight you will know the signal, if it should be after that you will see us."

The gig returned to the vessel, her muffled oars returning, as in coming to land, making no sound in the water, and when she was gone Drummond and Loftus turned towards the boat-landing.

It was nearly half a mile distant, but the sandy beach was smooth and firm, and the way easy.

Arrived at a favourable spot, they rested beneath the shelter of some bushes, whence they could observe the operations of Monoton and his crew.

The barge had arrived, and four men, besides Peter and his son, were engaged in landing the boxes and the pipes, some of which were transferred directly to a stout dray, which had been backed upon the landing, and to which were hitched two horses.

When the dray had been sufficiently loaded, Peter and the driver started off with it, leaving Richard with the other men to land the rest of the goods.

The road which the dray took wound along under the towering rocks of the inner face of the upper headland of the Pool, turning abruptly to the left before it reached the rise of the cliff upon which the beacon reared its light, and leading along at the foot of the eminence upon which the castle stood.

By-and-bye the dray was stopped, and at a low whistle from the steward, four men appeared from a thick tangle of vines by the wayside. Very soon this tangle of vines, seeming impenetrable, was separated, half upon one side, and half upon the other, revealing a passage beyond and the entrance to what seemed to be a cave in the rock.

The dray was backed into this opening, and its load speedily transferred to the cave, after which Monoton and the driver returned towards the Pool, leaving the four new men to dispose of the goods as they pleased.

"My soul," whispered Loftus, in his hiding-place on the opposite side of the way, "what a place for smugglers!"

"This is not the end, Harvey—wait," returned Drummond.

The steward and his crew worked expeditiously. By two o'clock the last load had been delivered at the cave and the dray sent off.

Half an hour afterwards, Peter and his son, and the four men who had been at work there, came forth, and having restored the thickly growing vines to their former tangled position they were ready to depart.

The workmen turned towards the village, while father and son looked for a narrow footpath leading up to the castle.

"Well, Richard, I call this a good night's work," said Peter, rubbing his hands with great satisfaction. "Two hundred pounds for us at the least calculation. And then, again, do you know I like Drummond's brazen impudence. The forging of the revenue certificates is a good thing for us. I shall not fear to let our agent send a part of the goods direct to Exeter. They can be transported as though you took them upon your own government landing at Arncliffe."

When the Monotons had disappeared, the captain of the brigantine and his lieutenant came out of their hiding-place, the former having first lighted the lamp of a dark lantern which he carried.

"Now, Loftus," said the captain, as they stopped before the tangled mass of vines, "I am going to trust you with a secret. I think—that is if I have not forgotten—I am treading in my father's footsteps. I visited this coast with him many times, and more than once I entered the cavern beyond this thicket in his company. I do not think I have forgotten. If I am to continue in this business I must know all its secrets, and here goes for the especial secret which Peter Monoton guards."

Thus speaking, he pulled aside a mass of the vine, and he and his companion passed through. At the entrance to the cavern he held back the mask of his lantern, and the clear convex lens emitted all the light he needed.

They found an outer cavern and an inner cavern, and within this inner cavern was a portion of the goods which had been brought from the brigantine, but not all.

"Where were the rest?"

"Now, let us see," said Drummond.

He found a door in the inner face of the rock, which he opened, and beyond this he found another cave where were the remaining articles of the night's work.

"We don't stop here," the captain added, "Hold your peace, Loftus, and follow me carefully."

Drummond soon found another hidden door, the opening of which admitted him and his companion to a vaulted passage, the far end of which was lost in the obscurity.

"This is masonry, and substantial work at that," said the lieutenant, as his eye rested upon the cemented walls and arch.

"It is an old passage," returned Guy, "and was probably built by the original founder of the castle as a means of escape to the sea shore in case of emergency. I have heard my father say that the old keep was of the time of William the Conqueror, though I am inclined to think it later. It may, however, have been as early as the reign of Stephen."

"It is known that the Conqueror apportioned this section of Devonshire to an ancestor of the present earl, but I have heard old squatters say, who know all the traditions by heart, that a grandson of that first Norman possessor laid the first stone of the castle, and as those were troublous times, when the Saxon was in arms and rampant, the lords of these castles took care that loopholes of escape were left open to them and their followers in case of successful sieges or assault by an enemy. This is evidently such a passage—once a hocus pass, but now the secret lair of the contrabandist. Alas! to what base uses may we come at last!"

In their progress they passed two doors of bolted oaken timber, both of which were open, and after a long, gradual ascent they came to what seemed an impenetrable rock; but Guy soon found a hidden spring and lever, and a portion of the rock swung away, leaving an aperture full two yards wide. Beyond this they came to a spacious, high-arched subterranean apartment, which smelled strongly of spirits; and no wonder, for as their eyes were able to pierce the dim distance of the place they discovered piled against the time, stained, mouldy walls, pipes, barrels, kegs, and breakers, of all sizes and shapes, while upon the pavement were numerous willow baskets, which were found to contain choice brands of wine of the most famous French, Spanish, and Italian vintages.

"Where is this?—what is it," asked Loftus, gazing around with intense interest. It was certainly a strange place. The wall were of huge stones, laid in cement, and the high arches, springing from the four walls, were supported in the

centre by four massive stone pillars, and in the side of these pillars were embedded huge iron rings, with fragments of rusty chains still hanging from them.

"The place looks natural," said Guy, showing the glare from the powerful lens of his lantern around the ghastly vault.

"It is years since my father brought me here, but I have not forgotten."

"But," repeated Loftus, "where are we? what place is it?"

"We are beneath the old Norman tower, or keep, of Arncliffe Castle," replied Drummond, "and in all probability our eyes may here rest upon the first stones of the structures laid."

"Will you ascend into the chambers above?"

"Not now, I have discovered all I sought. I have found the way open, and I have found where Peter Moncton houses his contraband spirit. A friend of mine—or he was a friend of my father—is very anxious to obtain the information which I shall now be able to impart to him. Upon my life, but Moncton hath a comfortable fortune hidden away here."

"Ay," responded Loftus, "but will not the young earl be apt to find this place when he comes home?"

"If the steward is wise his lordship will find the place empty. But come, we must not let the light of day surprise us."

They left the vault, closing the way behind them, and were careful when they had emerged into the open air, to see that the veil of tangled vines was arranged as they had found it.

When they reached the shore of the Pool the day was just breaking, and the gig was called without burning any powder.

(To be continued.)

EXILED FROM HOME.

CHAPTER II.

THE old squire's face did not soften, as his stern eyes slowly reverted to the prostrate figure of the poor young wanderer at his feet. Terrible as Nemesis, grim and pitiless as an avenging fate, he stood like a statue, without mercy or relenting in his heart.

And yet that girl was indeed his own daughter and only child—that Constance Markham, who had once been the light of his house and heart, the belle of the country side—that daughter whose death he had proclaimed to the world, and which was supposed to have wrecked his life.

The fierce wind seized the door he still held open and whirled it shut again.

The girl lay on the floor, her long black hair streaming over her face, which partially showed through it white as marble, her arms thrown above her head, her figure inanimate. The housekeeper, threw a look of pleading and reproach at the stony-visaged father, flew to the girl and knelt beside her, gathering her up into her arms.

"You will not send her away upon a night like this, sir?" she cried. "She must not go. She shall not go. For the love of Heaven, master, for the sake my young lady's dead mother, have pity on your child!"

But the squire heard the appeal unmoved.

"She cannot go forth like this," exclaimed Mrs. Quillet, in passionate pleading. "See, she is helpless, unconscious. To put her out now will be to commit a deliberate murder. She must stay till daybreak—till she can walk. If you put her out to-night, master, she will die, and the county will ring with the scandal of it."

The stony features of the old squire quivered now. He was proud of his old family name. No breath of scandal had ever tarnished its purity. He could have borne to see his daughter dead on the moor, but he could not have borne to have her story the subject of gossip in every alehouse and cottage in the county. He said, harshly:

"See that she is gone before daybreak. I will not see her again."

He secured the fastenings of the door, and went into the sitting-room.

He had scarcely disappeared when the butler, Quillet, the husband of the old housekeeper, advanced from the farther corner of the hall, where he had stood for some minutes, paralysed with horror and amazement.

The light fell on the girl's face. He gazed at the wan features, half-hidden by the dark hair, and whispered, shrilly:

"Is it our Miss Constance? What is this mystery? The master said she was dead. Why does treat her thus?"

The housekeeper's face was strangely pale and drawn. A look of trouble had settled in her eyes. She answered, sharply:

"Don't be asking foolish questions! How should I know? I believed her dead. I can scarcely yet believe that she is alive. Take her up and carry her to my room. Poor girl! Poor lamb!"

The butler obeyed, picking up the young wanderer, and conveying her down the hall into a passage beyond, and on to the housekeeper's own room, Mrs. Quillet following with the lamp.

The housekeeper's room was well lighted and warmed. The butler laid the girl upon a low, broad lounge and wheeled the latter near the fire.

"Now go and make a fire in Miss Constance's own room," said the housekeeper. "She must be got to bed directly. Thank Heaven, the rooms are well aired, I'll make the bed myself. And, John, say nothing to the housemaid. Let no one know that Miss Constance lives and is come home. The master would kill us if we let the truth come to light."

The butler hurried away on his errand.

Then the old housekeeper, pitiful and tender to the nursing who had lain on her bosom long ago, drew away the streaming hair from the girl's face and gazed on those wan features with strange intenceness. Then with tears she kissed her face, her lips, her hands.

"Poor girls!" she murmured, removing the clinging shawl and the small sodden boots, and chafing the little cold hands. "Heaven have pity on us all! Better she had died than to live for such a fate as this!"

She took up the slender fingers in her own stumpy hands. The girl's fingers were bare. No wedding-ring gleamed upon them. The housekeeper sighed heavily and muttered to herself words of grief and anguish. And yet she did not relax in her efforts to restore warmth and life to that chilled and wasted frame. She poured brandy between the pale lips, and worked over the girl with a zeal and anxiety that were inexpressibly painful and bitter.

The heavy eyelids lifted at last, but the dark eyes were vacant and wandering in their glances. The girl only moaned sorrowfully, and dropped her eyelids again, too weak and weary even to speak.

"Miss Constance!" said the old woman, softly; "Miss Constance, is it really you? How you have changed, my darling! But, whatever has happened I've a warm heart for you still, Miss Constance."

The girl heard, for a shade of deeper weariness flitted over her features, but she did not speak.

The butler now reappeared, saying that a fire had been made in the young lady's chamber.

"Take her up then," said the housekeeper, "and carry her upstairs."

Quillet obeyed, and the little procession marched into the great hall again and up the wide staircase.

The old squire must have heard the tramping of feet as they passed his door, but he made no sign.

Miss Markham's bed-chamber was long and large, with lofty frescoed ceiling, and with walls hung with fluted crimson silk. The carpet was of crimson velvet. The windows were hung with crimson silk curtains. It looked a very bower of warmth and splendour now, with a glowing fire in the wide grate, and with a dozen wax candles lighted in their silver sconces on the low marble mantelpiece.

The butler had drawn a sofa before the hearth. He laid the girl upon it, and departed in quest of freshly-aired bed-linen in the housekeeper's room below. He presently returned, and Mrs. Quillet hastened to make the bed, her husband assisting her.

The old butler's eyes continually reverted to the girl on the sofa, while his fingers were busy with the fleecy blankets and great pillows. Presently he said, in a hushed whisper:

"I can't make it out, Maria. The master said our young lady is dead. Miss Constance was different from this—isn't there some mistake?"

"What mistake should there be? Don't I know the girl I nursed from infancy to womanhood? There's a mystery, John. Heaven alone knows what it all means. But this I do know: that is our young lady yonder, alive and in the flesh, and while I live I will stand by her!"

Neither attempted to solve the mystery farther. They had believed Miss Constance dead; they accepted her return to life as something beyond explanation.

"Go now," said the housekeeper, at length. "You must mount the fastest horse in the stable, and ride to Penistone. Bring a doctor, at once—not the old family doctor, but a stranger. And mind, John, not one word of Miss Markham. You want

his services for a poor, young wandering woman who came to our door in the storm. Hark to that wind! It will be a rough ride and a long one, but hasten, John, for the love of mercy! She has sore need of help!"

The butler departed. Then the motherly old housekeeper undressed her charge, robed her in a night-dress taken from a drawer near at hand, and placed her in the wide bed. She combed and brushed the tangled hair, and bathed the pallid face, and all the while the girl watched her with vacant eyes, speaking no word, but moaning now and then as in extreme pain.

Mrs. Quillet having cared for her charge, gathered up her discarded clothing. The dress was of silk, but it was faded, dragged, and torn. Ruffles of point lace were in the neck and sleeves. The shawl was an Indian cashmere, of peculiar pattern and of great value. The housekeeper consigned the articles to a wardrobe, after an unavailing search after some clue to the mystery of the past year of her young lady's life.

"The pocket is empty," she said to herself. "She had no money. She wears no jewels. She has not even a wedding-ring. Where has she been during the past year? How has she offended her father—so beyond all forgiveness?"

The storm raged on, beating against the windows, and sighing and whirling and moaning among the trees. The old squire paced his floor, a prey to maddening thoughts, scourged by the furies of recollection, embittered to deepest hatred of the girl upstairs, invoking maledictions upon her with every stride and breath.

And in that upper room life and death fought fiercely for that object of his hatred. Mrs. Quillet feared that every moment might be the last for her charge. But when, three hours later, after a hard, cold ride, the butler returned, bringing with him a doctor, Constance Markham lay on her pillows, white and spent, like one dead, save that her breast rose faintly with her slow, almost inaudible breathing—and beside her lay a puny infant, a little wailing creature, whose hold on life seemed too weak to endure for an hour.

"The child will probably die," said the doctor, after giving instructions to Mrs. Quillet to prepare certain strengthening potions for the patient. "And the mother also! I can do nothing farther. If you should need me, you can send for me again."

The butler conveyed the doctor downstairs, comforted him with warm drinks and a good fee, and dismissed him.

All through the night the old housekeeper sat by the fire in that sick chamber with the baby on her knee, while the mother slept.

When morning broke, Mrs. Quillet brought the child and placed it in its mother's arms. Constance smiled faintly as she received it, but the smile was still vacant. The girl's memory still slept; her mind was still unbinged.

The old woman stole out into the hall. Her husband was lying on a rug before the door. He rose up as the door opened, and the faithful old pair, to whom the honour of that old house was almost dearer than their own, gazed into each other's eyes through tears.

"What will the master say now?" whispered the butler.

"Heaven knows. Perhaps, as the doctor says, they'll both die. It will be best so, John. If the child were a boy, he might make his way through the world in spite of shame and sorrow. But it's a girl, born to a hard fate, John, and let us pray that Heaven will take her now in mercy."

"Who will tell the master?"

"I will!" declared the housekeeper. "He must know. Be sure the servants think our young lady a mere vagrant woman. I must go back to her. The child is crying."

She returned to her charge in haste, and remained on duty until her husband knocked at the door, some three hours later, and informed her that the squire was in his sitting-room, and that his breakfast was ready.

"Set the tray on the hall-table and I will carry it in," said Mrs. Quillet. "She is asleep now," and she glanced toward the bed. "I can be spared for a few minutes."

Soon after the butler announced to his wife that the tray was waiting. Mrs. Quillet, with a last glance at her sleeping charge, descended the stairs and carried the tray into the sitting-room.

The old squire was there alone, before the bright hearth, looking a hundred-fold more haggard than on the previous day. He did not turn around at the

housekeeper's entrance, and she set down her tray and lingered, not knowing how to commence her story and trembling in anticipation of a burst of his fury.

"Here is your coffee, sir," she said at length, moving slowly away toward the door. "And the eggs and toast and bacon—"

The squire slowly turned his head. He looked graver and ten years older than on the previous night. His eyes asked sternly the question his lips could not frame.

"She's in her old room, sir," said the housekeeper, obeying his mute command. "She is very ill—like to die. I have had a doctor for her."

Still the squire did not speak, nor did he avert his stern, compelling gaze from the old woman's worn and troubled visage.

"She—there's a little baby, sir," faltered Mrs. Quillet. "It's a girl—"

The squire pointed with one long and bony forefinger towards the door, his countenance so terrible that the woman was appalled. She retreated silently and swiftly, returning up stairs.

There her breakfast was served to her. She did not show herself again in the squire's presence throughout the day, nor for days afterwards, keeping herself shut up with her patient.

The doctor was sent for again, though for days both mother and child lay at the very gates of death. The old housekeeper was a good nurse and had reared a family of children. She took this puny babe to her very heart, thinking with every morning that at nightfall the tiny creature would be dead.

But the mother and child, feeble as they were, maintained their hold on life. The mother lay silent as death, watching her nurse for hours together, and the old woman never knew whether her mind still wandered or if reason had seated herself again upon the throne she had so lately left vacant. The poor creature never showed any affection for her child, never caressed it, but Mrs. Quillet noticed that she stared at it often with a strange and steady gaze, which was unfathomable.

A week—two weeks thus passed. Constance sat up now, thin and shrunken and wan, never speaking, never smiling. Mrs. Quillet often longed to question her, but something in the girl's look of utter desolation and despair held her silent.

November glided into December. A month had passed since Constance Markham had so singularly returned to her home, and still she had not passed the threshold of her chamber, still the old squire had not looked again upon her face.

By this time the girl was able to sit up for most of the day, and her nurse began to think of her future. What was to become of her? Could the squire be induced to pardon her and reinstate her in her home? Would he grant her a father's protection, or would he send her forth with her child to wander homeless and friendless.

These questions troubled the housekeeper night and day. She resolved to make a last appeal to her employer, and, if possible, revive his former love for his child.

One night—a night the very counterpart of that on which Constance Markham had returned to her home, a night wild with storm and pitchy in its darkness—the old squire passed along the hall off which his daughter's room opened.

Mrs. Quillet heard his step and resolved to make a bold effort for the reinstatement of her darling. Laying down the child, she hurried into the hall and intercepted her master, leaving the door open behind her that he might see and be touched by the slim, drooping figure crouching in the big arm-chair in such hopeless attitude.

"Master," said the old woman, speaking quickly lest she should lose her desperate courage, "will you come in and see Miss Constance?"

The girl raised her head, listening.

The squire halted.

"See whom, did you say?" he asked, in a harsh and strident voice.

"Miss Constance," faltered the woman; "your daughter, sir—"

"My daughter is dead!" said the squire, in a voice that rang clear and cold as metal. "She died a year ago! You mean the woman in there, perhaps," and he shot a glance into the chamber and at the girl, whose attitude was now intent and eager. "I will not see her. As soon as she is well enough let her be gone from my house. And let her bear with her my curse!"

He hissed the last words, and stalked away, disappearing down the stairs.

Mrs. Quillet returned to her charge, whose face was curiously pale, but who was silent as ever, but with a new weariness pitiful to witness.

"My lamb," said the old housekeeper, tenderly "he will forgive you yet. He cannot curse the child he worshipped, whatever your faults. Speak to me, Miss Constance. Tell me that you understand me. Your old nurse loves you, darling."

But the girl's look of despair did not lighten; she only sighed and maintained that peculiar silence that so puzzled her attendant.

Mrs. Quillet soon after went downstairs to her supper, the young lady having been served, and being well enough to be left to herself.

As she passed through the front hall she opened the door and peered out into the night. The air was full of whirling drifts of snow. The sky was black as ink. A wide, wild waste of snow, trackless and terrible, stretched out upon the moors. The December wind was fierce and keen and chill.

"An awful night!" thought the housekeeper, shivering and closing the door. "Heaven help the poor to-night! It was a night less wild than this when Miss Constance came—Heaven pity her!"

She went down to the warm room. Her supper was ready, her husband waiting. The pair lingered over the meal. Suddenly the crash of a door slamming heavily startled them both.

"The housemaid," said Mrs. Quillet; "she grows more careless every day. As I was saying, these are dark days for this old house, John. I wonder if the master will ever be reconciled to Miss Constance. She never speaks to me, but I know she has her mind again. I know she heard and understood every word her father said to-night."

Ay, she had understood only too well!

When Mrs. Quillet returned to that upper chamber the girl had gone. The baby lay in the bed, crying piteously, but the young mother had vanished.

Wild with terror, the housekeeper explored the adjoining rooms, the entire mansion. She remembered the door that had slammed so heavily, and the truth came home to her soul in one piercing conviction.

Constance Markham had gone forth into the storm, even as she had come, gone into the darkness and whirling snows and fierce December blasts—gone in her weakness and despair—gone with a father's bitterest curse upon head—gone to what fate?

CHAPTER III.

THE old housekeeper spread an instant alarm throughout the mansion. Servants with lanterns were despatched to search the moor in the wild, white drifts and raging storm for the wandering girl. The butler took an active part in the eager quest. Mrs. Quillet, wild with terror and excitement, rushed out upon the lawn, nearly losing herself in the snow, and then hurried in again, gasping for breath.

As she paused in the lower hall for a moment, after closing the door, to arrange her loosened gray hair and disordered garments, hearing the faint wail of the deserted baby upstairs, the door of the sitting-room opened, and the old squire looked out, demanding angrily the cause of so much confusion.

"Oh, sir!" cried Mrs. Quillet, in a breathless sort of way, "she's gone! She's gone!"

The squire's face grew suddenly pale, then furiously red.

"Who's gone?" he demanded, harshly.

"She—Miss Constance! Gone out into this awful storm to her death. Heaven have pity on her! Oh, my poor lamb!"

The squire's face grew dark as a thundercloud. The lightning of anger leaped from his stormy eyes.

"Hush!" he commanded. "If you speak that name again, you will leave my house. So the vagrant woman is gone? It is as well. Gone to her death? Heaven grant it!"

He retreated within the sitting-room abruptly, and slammed the door.

Mrs. Quillet sighed meaningly, and toiled up the stairs to the waiting child.

As she sat down before the fire, in a low nursing-chair, with the baby in her arms, she muttered:

"Once he worshipped Miss Constance. Now he would let her die in this pitiless storm and not lift one finger to her rescue. He is glad that she is out in this wild snow to-night. And she will die, my poor darling—my innocent nursing! For she is innocent! I know that she is pure and innocent in heart and soul, in spite of her father's curses, in spite of the lack of wedding-ring, in spite of this baby—in spite of everything! I would believe her even if angels should testify against her. Oh! what is this mystery—this awful mystery? They will find her and bring her in, and then I shall persuade her to tell me!"

She rang the bell and ordered the cook to prepare coffee and other hot drinks. She paced the floor, the baby in her arms, and peered from the windows and waited in a horrible suspense that was sickening to bear.

"She will be chilled to death," moaned the old woman. "She will stagger and fall and be covered by these awful drifts! Or she will lie down and die! Oh, Heaven take care of her!"

The hours toiled wearily on. The servants came and went. Mounted grooms joined in the wild search for the "vagrant woman."

Not one of those who sought for her, with the exception of the old butler, knew that the half-crazy young wanderer was in reality the Miss Constance Markham who was supposed to be dead—not one of them ever suspected that the girl who was now lost in the night, the darkness, and the whirling snow-drifts was in truth the delicately nurtured heiress of Lonsmoor, who had once been the belle of the county, the pride of her father's heart, and was now popularly believed to be sleeping her "last long sleep" under foreign soil.

But the search was all in vain. The wind increased in fury, raging like a loosened demon, piling snow against the fences, the terraces, and every obstruction; the flakes fell ceaselessly; the air was filled with the wild white whirl. The roads and paths that led over the moors were undiscernible. One vast whiteness reigned everywhere, upon the earth and in the air.

The men came in one by one, chilled and disheartened. The cook administered to them the hot drinks she had prepared.

By the morning the men were all in, and not one of them had found the wandering girl.

The old squire did not show his face that night, but his light burned steadily in his sitting-room, and the housekeeper, stealing now and then down the stair, heard his ceaseless tread to and fro, and knew that his night, too, was sleepless.

When morning came—a gray, snowy morning—a white pall covered the moor, the park, the fields, and the gardens of Lonsmoor. Fences and shrubs were blotted out. A vast white desolation, reminding one of Arctic scenes, was spread far and wide.

The men, well mounted, went forth again at day-break to renew their search upon the trackless moor. Mrs. Quillet, worn and trembling, with swollen eyes and pale complexion, carried in her master's breakfast, as was her wont.

He was standing at a window, looking out, as she entered. When she had deposited the tray upon a table, he turned slowly, and the old woman started back at sight of his face.

He had grown years older during the past night. He was grayer, more haggard, and far more stern. There was a fierceness in his sunken, burning eyes that stilled the exclamation that rose to Mrs. Quillet's lips.

She had always been in awe of her master, but a new fear entered now into her regard towards him.

"Well?" he said, in a voice she scarcely recognized, yet it was not less harsh and dictatorial than usual. "Is she found?"

"Not yet," answered the housekeeper, putting her apron to her eyes. "They have gone out to look again!"

The squire turned abruptly again to the window.

"She must be dead by this," said the old woman, brokenly. "The awful exposure—the storm—the deadly cold—would have killed one so tenderly reared. She is dead!"

The old squire made a fierce gesture to her to depart and she withdrew.

All that day he remained shut up in his sitting-room, pacing the floor, or watching from the window for the home-bringing of the daughter whom he had cursed.

And all that day the men servants searched, and the snows fell ceaselessly, and a gloom hung like a pall over the mansion of Lonsmoor.

Mrs. Quillet nursed the little child tenderly, and watched at the windows, and started nervously at every sound, and the look of terror and despair deepened on her old face hour by hour and minute by minute.

When night came on again, with still that thick white veil dropping steadily down over the face of nature, the last vestige of hope fled from the heart of the old housekeeper, and an awful dread and anguish took its place.

She expected the return of the servants with a ghastly burden, and made ready for its reception.

The servants came straggling in, chilled and muttering at the trouble they had taken for a "wandering beggar."

They had searched the trackless waste far and wide, exploring drifts, and visited Dunford Bridge railway station and Penistone, and every hamlet on the moors within a radius of twelve miles, going

singly and in pairs, and they had found no trace of the lost girl.

Those heavy snows seemed to have blotted her out of existence.

"She was so lately ill," said the old butler, coming up to the lonely chamber in which his wife kept her vigil over the month-old baby, to make his report, "so weakly still that she could never have borne one hour of the chill, the wind and the storm. She's dead, Maria, under some snow-drift. Poor, delicate young creature! Who that saw her a twelvemonth or more ago would have dreamed that she would ever have a fate like this?"

Mrs. Quillet's tears fell on the innocent baby face that lay against her breast.

"My poor lamb! My bonnie nursing!" she said, moaningly. "Oh, John, John, it is awful!"

"Yes. She wandered on—I can see just how it all ended!" said the butler. "She staggered on through the drifts for an hour or more, and then she stumbled into some hollow and fell. She did not rise again, although she may have made two or three efforts. Then the snow fell upon her and covered her over and her grave is hidden from our search."

Mrs. Quillet sobbed despairingly. The old butler wiped his eyes.

"It is as well so," he said. "This world held no refuge for her, after all that had happened. Her own father had disowned and cursed her. She was homeless, friendless, accursed. Let us hope, Maria, that there is room for her in Heaven!"

"And that Heaven will be merciful to her to whom her own father was merciless," said the housekeeper.

"When the snows disappear we shall find her," said the butler, "unless she lost her way and fell into the moor tarn. In that case she may never be found. How does the master take it?"

"I don't know. He looks fiercer and more terrible than ever, but he asks no questions. He has not eaten a morsel to-day. And that reminds me that I must take in his dinner to him."

(To be continued.)

A CHILD OF MISFORTUNE.

I was born to ill-luck. Born on a day in November. Born with a passion for field sports, and with the inheritance of every aptitude to be a country squire, except the requisite property. My birthday was likewise old Aubrey's, and he notes it is one of the unluckiest days in all this year.

In most of the quieter affairs of this life I have had simply no luck at all. I have risked very few—have been unlucky in these of course. Always try to limit all my risks, of course, as closely as possible.

Thus my ill luck is so narrowed as in general to be able to pursue me in little things. A few instances of these may amuse my fortunate readers. That is; if my ill luck will allow me to find any reader. To most people the ill luck they never experience is good fun. Thus, then, let me exemplify mine:

First.—Suddenly I find myself in want of the commonest article, no matter what, a knife, or a pencil, or paper, or envelopes, or a piece of indiarubber, something special, but most ordinary general—to be had everywhere. I inquire for it at a shop; it is not there, I try a dozen other shops in succession. No, they are all out of it.

Secondly.—I am staying in the country, at the house of a friend, have occasion to look out a word I particularly wish to be sure about, or a quotation I am anxious to verify. My friend's library contains the lexicon or other book I want to consult. I turn to the place where the information I need should be.—The page is gone!

The very page is the one torn out.

Thirdly.—I have left my watch at home. Having an appointment, fear I am behind time. Think whether I had not better jump into a cab. Had rather not if I can help it, grudging cab hire above all things as when avoidable, an unproductive expense, and always a fine. Think to see the time by a public clock on the way. Find it has stopped. Hurry on past shop and shop, peering for a clock in it—no clock.

Fourthly.—My favourite opera is announced for a certain night. I know the house will be crowded.

But I don't take my ticket several days beforehand. I know if I do something will happen to stop me from going, and I shall lose at least half-a-guinea. So I wait till the appointed day of performance, then take my ticket at the latest moment. Perhaps on occasional domestic circumstances I take three tickets. Not only that but we all go and dine at a restaurant. We drive to the theatre, the cabman necessarily extorts more than his fare, and the opera has been changed within the last hour.

Fifthly.—I am engaged to dine at some place out of

town. Punctuality is the soul of dinner. Have taken care to hit the railway time exactly. Arriving at the station find that some emergency has occasioned it to be altered that very day.

Sixthly.—I trust an intelligent lad for once to post a letter of the utmost consequence. He forgets it.

Seventhly.—I myself send important documents by post; think I have securely closed the envelope. No, find it has burst open and its contents have tumbled out.

Eighthly.—Unless I keep carefully feeling my pockets my knife, pencil, pocket handkerchief, latch-key or note-book is sure to fall out of them.

Ninthly.—In any moment of forgetfulness, posting a letter mechanically, I am safe to put it in the wrong box. Any mechanical I perform in a moment of inattention is always a blunder. In writing, if I relax my attention for a moment, I mis-spell a word, or write one the reverse of what I mean. Am especially safe to misplace "latter" and "former," and put white for "black" and "black" for white.

Tenthly.—If I happen to be urgently in want of change, nobody can give it me. Unless I carefully provide myself with sixpences and coppers, never find anything in my purse to see a tout or a porter with under a shilling. In particular, if pressed for time I step into a shop to make a purchase, the shopman has almost always to send out for change. If not he is almost sure to take ten times as long as usual for serving me.

Eleventhly.—Behind time; also pulling on my boots, always carefully in fear of what might happen—bang, goes the loop, so in the middle of a walk, unless I have previously made sure of their stability, do my brace buttons.

Twelfthly.—Not only am I continually compelled to make blunders myself but it is possible for people concerned in any business of mine to blunder they do. Suppose any one sends me money by post the chances are a hundred to one there will be a flaw in the post-office order.

Thirteenthly.—One more instance, only seeing that of instances only, multiplication only in vexation although I always take the greatest pains to express myself in the most perspicuous language I can master, or my meaning continually gets ridiculously—painfully misunderstood.

Have I anything to account for my persistent ill-luck? Yes, the day of my birth is one of odd number. Numerous omens impare gaiety. By deus the post means the opposite. I believe in the malign influence of odd numbers, the odds are against me. I shall be told this is superstition.

I know that I am superstitious. Not at all ashamed to say so. Consider a want of superstition a great defect in one's character.

Do not hesitate to own myself inclined to believe in spirits. Only very much wish to be satisfied of their existence. But so unlucky am I in this respect, as in every other, that I have never yet had the luck to see a ghost.—From Punch's Pocket-Book, 1876.

SCIENCE.

There is more rivalry among the gunmakers. Herr Krupp, not to be beaten by the English with the 8-ton gun, has proposed to the German Government to produce a weapon of 150 tons. The cost of discharging our latest infant is said to be 10*l*. for shell and 15*l*. for powder. Herr Krupp's model would cost about twice that sum.

The largest revolving gun manufactured is now at Woolwich, where it had been constructed to assist the investigations which the Frink Board are pursuing on the subject of fog signals. It is a revolver with five chambers, firing successively through an open-mouthed barrel, and moving about on a kind of truck. It weighs 35*wt*., and appears to be very ingeniously contrived. It will be forwarded to Shoeburyness to undergo a series of trials in competition with various charges of gun-cotton.

EXPERIMENTS WITH SEEDS AND LITMUS PAPER.—If seeds (barley, corn, etc.) be placed between moist pieces of litmus paper, the roots stick to the paper and colour it so intensely red that even on the back of the paper their course can be traced in red lines on a blue ground. If tincture of litmus be repeatedly added, the intensity of the red colour is increased. M. Dohrn thus demonstrated lately the separation of a strong non-volatile acid by the roots.

ADMINISTRATION OF FOOD BY HYPODERMIC INJECTION.—One of the latest practical discoveries of science is the administration of food by hypodermic injection. We all know that it has been the custom for many years to administer morphia by

making a small puncture in the skin and injecting a solution of morphia with a syringe and that sleep follows almost immediately. A Vienna physician, named Kruegg, has injected fatty liquid, solution of sugar, milk and yolk of egg, in this way. This expedient enables a physician to feed a madman who refuses to take his food in the ordinary way. We see no reason why the same expedient should not be adopted where there is a difficulty in swallowing food, in cases of sore throat for instance.

THE EIGHT-ONE-TON GUN.—The trial of the 8-ton gun was resumed on the 10th ult., at the Royal Arsenal, Woolwich. The gun was first fired with a charge of 220*lb*. of powder, the cubes of which were 1.5 inch in diameter, the specific gravity 1.78, the same as on Thursday. The weight of the projectile was 1,450 *lb*. The velocity attained by the shot was 1,464 ft. per second, the pressure being 28.1 tons on the square inch. In another round, 2 cubic inch pebble powder was employed, and this gave a velocity of 1,866 ft., and a pressure of 24.4 tons. There was only one more charge fired, and in this 250 *lb*. of 2 inch powder was employed with a 1,269 *lb*. shot. The increase of 50 *lb*. in the powder gave a velocity of 1,523 ft. per second; with scarcely any additional expansive force, the pressure gauges recording 24.8 tons per inch. The officers present regarded this as the most satisfactory result, and by far the best of the day's experiments. This will have the effect of lessening the weight and increasing the size of the shot; and extending the capabilities of the monster gun.

NEW AERIAL MACHINE.—Experiments were made on the Great Limes, on the 15th ult., at Chatham, by order of the authorities, with the new aerial machine, the invention of Mr. Simmonds, the aeronaut. The experiments were made under the direction and in the presence of the Royal Engineer Committee, a large number of officers being upon the ground. The machine, should it answer, is intended to be used in the field in time of war, by means of which observations might be taken. It is a large affair, the covering being of French cambric, made waterproof by being coated with a solution of indiarubber, the framework being made of spars of wood about an inch and a quarter thick and thin galvanized iron wire, and when in the air it assumes the shape of a parachute on the covering becoming fully inflated. It is said that the advantage it has over a balloon is, that it requires no gas to inflate it, but then a good breeze is necessary to float it in the air, without which it is of but little use, as was proved by the experiments. The machine, having been got ready and a sandbag being placed where the car would be, a number of Royal Engineers attempted to get it up by running with a rope, which was attached to the framework, the process being precisely similar to that employed by boys in flying kites. After one or two attempts the machine went up, and after reaching a height of 100 feet the ballast was not sufficient, and there was not enough wind to keep it in the air, consequently it fell to the ground; by the concussion some of the framework was broken, and the experiments were thus stopped. It is thought that with a good breeze the experiments would have been successful. The damages will be repaired and some further experiments made next week.

THE AIR WE BREATHE.

The atmosphere is composed of one part oxygen and four parts nitrogen. The former supports life, the latter extinguishes it. The more oxygen there is in the livelier, the healthier, the more joyful are we, the more nitrogen, the more sleepy and stupid and dull do we become. But if all the air were oxygen the first lighted match would wrap the world in instant flame; if all were nitrogen, the next instant there would not be upon the populated globe a single living creature.

When oxygen was discovered by Priestley, nearly a century ago, there was a universal jubilation among doctors and chemists. The argument was plausible, and seemed perfectly convincing—"If oxygen is the life and health of the atmosphere, we have found out how to make oxygen, we have only to increase the quantity in the air we breathe, in order to wake up new life, to give health to the diseased, and youth to the aged."

But, on trial, it was found, that it made a man a maniac or an idiot, and, if continued, a corpse! Various other experiments have been made to improve upon the handiwork of the all-wise Maker of the universe, but they have been successive failures; and thinking men have long since come to the conclusion, that, there can be no improvement upon the first creation.

A BEAUTIFUL LADY BURGLAR AND HER LAWYERS.—A trial for burglary a short time ago in one of the courts of New Jersey excited unusual interest owing to the fact that the alleged burglar was a young lady of great personal attractions; and the "sensation" was enhanced by the conduct of the

fair prisoner, who, when acquitted of the charge, in the exuberance of her joy, and gratitude threw herself into the arms of her counsel and kissed him again and again amid the plaudits of a large and admiring audience. The high-spirited girl has again fallen into trouble, and has just been tried on another charge of throwing stones and dangerous missiles at the house of the prosecutor in the former suit. At the second trial there was, it was stated, a zealous cavalcade among the members of the New Jersey bar to be chosen as her counsel. The barrister from California who defended her on the former occasion had been engaged by the prosecution, and ex-Judge Suydam was the fortunate lawyer selected for the defence. The case was tried before his honour the Mayor of Plainfield. After a "spirited trial," the young lady was again acquitted, to the delight of a large assemblage, who were attracted to the court in the hope of witnessing a repetition of the scenes that occurred on the first trial. In this they were disappointed, for no sooner was the case over than ex-Judge Suydam precipitately rushed out of the court and escaped the kisses his client was prepared to shower on him. His conduct in not standing his ground has exposed him to severe criticism, but he excuses himself on the score of bashfulness, which is peculiar to a state of bachelorhood, and, indeed, constitutes one of its principal charms.

THE YOUNGEST OF THE FAMILY.

SOME people are born to be victims of circumstances. I believe I was. There has been a fatality against my exercise of my own will. Whatever may be my own choice, I am sure to find myself in the end quietly and resignedly carrying out the will and wishes of some one else. My inward indignation and vexation may be ever so tumultuous, yet the fact remains, I am for ever ruled by my friends.

I am the youngest of five brothers. Throughout my childhood there was one uninterrupted course of imposition on the part of the four big boys, and of concessions and conciliation on mine.

Yet I love those boys dearly, and am unfeignedly glad to see them in their several homes with their respective wives, surrounded by their families, of promising children, prosperous, comfortable, and happy.

Sometimes, when they joke me roughly on old times, or perpetrate one of their old-fashioned "sells" on my unsuspecting good-nature, off-guard for a moment, I wince and shiver.

I am, perhaps, unnecessarily sensitive about being done by my big brothers. But in general we are a cheerful, comfortable and happy band of brothers. Still I never felt any desire to go and live in the house of any of them.

Perhaps it was on account of this inclination among them to put up with me in a joking way. I never gave that as a reason. But I am sure that was what I particularly disliked, and what caused me the only unhappiness I ever experienced while my four well-to-do older brothers.

I had some taste in drawing, and wanted to be an artist.

But Tom and Sam peeped at it as a silly boyish scheme; and Bill and Dick declared it could never earn salt at picture-making. Tom and Sam averred that they never expected me to support myself, whatever I did, but being an artist was altogether too trifling an end for them to tolerate in any of their family.

Tom proposed that I should take a good rising position in his great wholesale grocery warehouse. Sam said I might take a clerkship in his counting-house, and he would put me along as fast as I was able to go. Bill averred that there was no business so good as the book trade, and he would guarantee to teach me all the general principles of it in one year, and all the specialties, so I could set up for myself in it, at the end of five years.

But I didn't see how I was to do much if I did set up for myself, with only two hundred pounds capital.

Our father left us just that sum each, in ready money, and each of the boys had conceived full as good a start in life from his former employer as they offered me. They were such smart promising fellows no wonder they made their way rapidly. Dick said I could try selling on commission for him. He had a large business in that line. I should have half the commission on everything I sold, for the first year. But I hate selling, seeking custom is so much like asking favours, a respectable beggary. I refused all their offers.

They agreed to each take me for three months of the year, and provide for me. The boys held a conference how they should support me.

I suppose they did not realize that I was eighteen years old then, and began to feel like a man. I was ten years younger than Dick, the youngest of them. I had always been the baby, the child, to them all. But that state of affairs had become very trying to me.

I was determined to end it by making a decided stand, and asserting, at one stroke, both my independence and my ability. So I went to work to establish myself where I could at least make out to earn my own living.

When the four boys came over to my boarding-place to tell me of their charitable intentions, I was prepared to once more decline their plans. I had shown my drawings to Mr. Betternrich, the principal architect of our city, and had engaged with him for five years on a salary quite sufficient for my support. So I had concluded to remain in my present quarters.

Tom was glad I had abandoned my wild, romantic dream of being an artist. Sam offered to extend to me an allowance to make my salary tolerably comfortable. I had not told him how much it was. Bill said he knew I should grow sensible, and take to business in the end. Dick asked me what would become of me if I married, if my salary would but barely support myself.

To him alone I replied. I said I should follow the wise example of my brothers, and not marry until I was at least twenty-five.

Then they all laughed; for Tom and Sam were bald-headed bachelors before they saw fit to indulge in the luxury of wife and home, and the others were respectively twenty-eight and nine. It was probably the recency of Dick's matrimonial bliss that suggested the idea to him.

Then the next week they all went out with their families to celebrate Aunt Hetty's sixtieth birthday. Aunt Hetty was the fairy godmother of our family. There was a little romantic story, floating mythical in the family annals, that she had first loved our father and gave him up to a favourite sister who also found him very attractive.

I can only just remember father, and my mother died before my babyship was a week old.

Perhaps that in part accounted for the universal tenderness I received from the family relatives. My brothers were too honest-hearted to be jealous. They only looked down on me as an inferior sort of a child—a weakling—and patted and humoured me with the rest. Aunt Hetty showed me the usual tenderness and loving kindness, but she was a strong-minded and strong-hearted woman, and I sometimes thought she felt a little of the boys' abiding contempt, consideration and tender contempt. It hurt me. I loved Aunt Hetty. We all loved her. And I think not one of us was in danger by the fact that she was mistress of a very handsome fortune, which she made no secret would one day fall to us.

But I did not go down to her old ancestral home to congratulate her upon her sixtieth birthday. I had just begun my engagement with Mr. Betternrich. He was a severe man, though kind in his own stern way, and I did not like to ask for a holiday in the first week of my work.

I did not mention to the boys that I was not going. I listened to the arrangements for the day with the same interest I would have displayed as a participant. Then I went to my room and wrote to Aunt Hetty a note of good wishes and congratulation. I told her just why I did not go myself and carry them. It was not the first disappointment of my life, nor the greatest, since I had given up being an artist and settled down to architecture, the dull, dry art of mere lines and figures, with no glorious covering, so warm, dreamy, revelling in pure beauty. But perhaps next to the loss of my long boyhood's dream of art was the loss of this happy day with dear old Aunt Hetty.

The only thing that made this grievance tolerable, as also what reconciled me to architecture, was that I chose it myself. No big brother had recommended architecture to my attention. No big brother had advised me to give up Aunt Hetty's birthday. So I found strength to bear both afflictions. The children missed Uncle Harry in their games. My brothers wondered much at my absence, and decided that I was growing odd. Aunt Hetty, bless her good heart! did not say one word about my letter and explanation.

So I let the boys think me odd; and as the years passed the opinion strengthened. They often renewed the offer of an allowance to piece out my slender salary. More often, as I thought, as they found me quite resolved to do without aid and live on my own earnings.

I never told them exactly what I earned. The fiction of my poverty seemed to afford them so much real comfort in the opportunity of patronizing condescension and offers of aid that they were sure

would be denied that I had not the heart to break the illusion.

They often spoke with Aunt Hetty about my prospects, and all in concert highly approved my unexpected pluck and backbone in persisting in my own maintenance, declining all aid. Aunt Hetty often made me handsome presents. So she did to the others, but mine were always the most costly—the most thoroughly useful. The dear boys always rejoiced at this, and sometimes I felt I was acting quite the part of a hypocrite. Yet I could not come out, and tell them I have all I want for present use, with the prospect of perhaps a fortune as large as yours in the future.

So the years slipped by. My engagement with Mr. Betternrich expired, and I became his partner. He had never taken one before.

The boys saw at once how wise it was for such a gifted and successful man to take into partnership a young fellow who was used to his ways and could relieve him of most of the drudgery of his business. Why should I come out conceitedly, and tell them I planned as many buildings as Mr. Betternrich himself and gave generally as much satisfaction, and that each of us had a clerk to copy, finish off, and write specifications? I did not tell them at all.

Aunt Hetty was delighted with my good fortune. I don't suppose she knew whether architecture related more particularly to designing or to estate-raising; but the fact of the partnership, she said, showed that I had been faithful and industrious, and though it might be a small kind of business compared with colonial produce and provisions, books, or hundryery, still she congratulated me on the proof of my employer's approval, and hoped, nay, confidently expected, that I should one day make as much of a man as either of my brothers.

Aunt Hetty generally made substantial expression of her sentiments. The next thing I heard, she had made a transfer, by gift, of two thousand pounds to each of my brothers.

The boys told me of it. She said nothing except that I had always looked more like my father than either of the others. So I knew I was Aunt Hetty's favourite by virtue of my face, and if I continued to assert my independence, should probably be the favoured heir of all the remainder of her fortune. No one told me so. But the boys knew it, and I know it. It came to be alluded to as a settled fact that I was Aunt Hetty's favourite, and was to be her heir. They said it was a very good thing—the very best arrangement that could be. And not one of the grand old true-hearted fellows grudged my having some five or six times as much as Aunt Hetty's money as he.

I wanted to say that it wasn't fair, and I didn't want it to be so. But I never did. Whenever it was on my tongue's end to speak, some one came out with one of the old patronizing remarks, which so crushed me that I felt it would be the height of assumption in me to decline anything, or to dream of trying to put myself on an equality with the other boys by making an equal sharing of our joint inheritance.

Besides the family tradition of "Harry's inefficiency" had grown another, since the date of my eighteenth birthday, and of my persistent resistance of all my brothers' business offers, that of "Harry's obstinacy." Perhaps I had given colour and strength to this idea by a few decided remarks.

There was one subject on which I was decidedly very decided. I intended to select my own wife; and to marry whom I pleased—if I could get into without reference to my brothers' opinions. I was now twenty-eight, and outwardly comfortable in circumstances, with good prospects, since Aunt Hetty's special kindness promised me her fortune.

Frequent remarks were made upon the propriety and general feasibility of my marrying and settling in a house of my own.

It was no new idea to me. Since the time of my partnership with Mr. Betternrich I had learned by the general consideration and sweetness I received in society that other people considered me not merely marriageable, but, indeed, highly eligible, whatever my brothers might believe. But I had never yet seen just the woman who could call out the feelings that I dimly knew were sleeping somewhere hid away in my heart.

I awaited the day of my doom when I should see this queen of my heart; and meanwhile I had pleasant acquaintances among quite a circle of young ladies.

I do not think I listed. I never made pretence of caring more for them than I did. I only said agreeable things without being specially complimentary, and entered heartily into all plans of amusement where I could make myself useful for the general good of all, myself included.

It is a dangerous thing for a man to lose his health—become worn with business—or any such silliness



["SHALL WE MEET AGAIN?"]

Notwithstanding the popular prejudice in favour of strength and size, as the grandest and most desirable attributes of manhood, it is an obstinate fact that feebleness and delicacy at once stamp a man—I mean a young man—as interesting. Of all terrible fates, deliver me from the fate of an interesting young man! I think I would as lief be inefficient.

I know that there came a time in my twenty-ninth summer when excessive laziness had become a chronic disease with me. I suppose I was somewhat worn with an unusually busy spring. I fear that I was becoming interesting, from the looks of tender regret I received from many kind hearts covered with fair female faces. The boys said my face was as sharp as a razor. I surmise that they told Aunt Hetty. At any rate I received from her a cordial and undecidable invitation to come to her house, and pass a few months in rest and summer recreation.

It would have all been very pleasant and gratifying but for an appalling little postscript which ran thus:

"I have a friend spending the summer with me—a fine womanly girl—whom I shall be glad to have you meet; and if you should eventually appreciate each other sufficiently to join your fortunes in marriage, it would be the greatest joy of my old age."

Aunt Hetty's good sense had repented of her suggestion before the ink was dry. There was a dash of the pen through all that followed the semicolon. But I made out the whole of it, and saw what was the plan in her dear old head. What could I do? If one of the boys had undertaken it, I could have fought it out with him. But dear, kind, loving old Aunt Hetty? I could not even refuse her invitation. So I wrote an acceptance, and promised to be with her on Thursday.

So when I found myself seated in the train, facing a kind and sensible, if not beautiful face belonging to

a young woman, I was satisfied with the vision presented, and thence I fell unconsciously to gazing directly at the face. "It was pre-eminently a good face. Not notably a handsome one. The eyes were kind, calm and true; the lips amiable, yet firm, with just that plumpness that shows affection without that over-sweetness that eventually sickens and palls on the taste; there was nose enough to be sensible, to show a decided character, without becoming obtrusive. I studied the face more than I realized, for suddenly the eyes met mine. I relinquished my investigations with a blush of apology.

Soon after an occupant of the carriage got out. The lady moved to the window to allow some one to take the vacant seat. I was nearest to her, but after what had passed I hesitated to obtrude myself further. She looked up a moment into my face, but did not speak.

"Shall I sit here?"

"If you please."

Common-place words—given, too, in a matter-of-fact manner. But I liked both words and manner. They set me at once at ease concerning my former rudeness. I expressed my relief with an unconsciously hearty "Thank you," and established myself by her side. We began conversation by alluding to the multitude who sought the topics country at this season. Thence we passed to other

But the pleasure of it, to me, lay in the change that was produced in the face of my companion. To say that it lightened and brightened would be no proper expression. She became ten years younger. I had considered her a fine woman—I found her a charming girl. Her dimples peeped out in her cheeks. She seemed to grow younger as long as I talked with her. She had gone from thirty to eighteen in my opinion—might have gone on to thirteen for aught I know, if I had not reached my destination, and been obliged to leave her.

The roughness of breaking up a train never before seemed to me so rough as when we drew to a stop at K—, and I found my companion reposefully showing that her journey was not ended, though mine was. I had never been so sorry to leave a chance acquaintance before. I knew there was little hope of accidentally meeting her again. Yet I dared not propose to purposely do so, lest it should not appear to her as delightful a prospect as it did to me.

The guard called the name of the station. "I must leave you here," I said, in a grave tone. "You have rendered my ride an unusual pleasure. It will make me very happy if I may have the pleasure of meeting you again."

"Thank you, sir. It would no doubt be an equal pleasure to me," she replied, with a frank smile.

"Will you tell me how I may do so?" I suddenly ventured.

Her eyes opened in merry width. "Oh, I don't know, I am sure," she replied. "I only know the world is not very big. From what you have said, I know that your connection and associations in the city are similar to my own. It is possible we shall meet again, and become acquainted. Meanwhile we are as yet only strangers. Good-afternoon."

She bowed and smiled pleasantly, but I was crushed by her reply. It was kind, but so self-poised and contained. I was bitterly regretting the parting. Evidently it did not grieve her in the least. It would never be of the smallest moment to her if she should never lay her grand, calm eyes on my tolerable face and figure again through the whole course of her life. Or was it that she was sure she should see me again? What had I said? Nothing certainly to tell my name, or much of my position and associates. I was convinced she did not know me, and afterwards learned that she did not.

Two days later I reached Aunt Hetty's hospitable door. To say that I dreaded the visit, is saying very little. The fretfulness of my debilitated health, added to the unpleasant prospect of being expected to love and court some strange woman, who might or might not attract me to the enterprise, produced anything but an amiable state of mind.

But Aunt Hetty greeted me with her usual hearty affection, and in the first hour of my stay, sitting alone with her in her pleasant sewing-room, I regained somewhat of my cheerfulness and composure. I even became so self-possessed as to inquire if the friend of whom she wrote had arrived.

"Oh, yes, she came a week ago. She is now taking her afternoon siesta—her beauty sleep she calls it—that she may be fresh and wakeful for the evening. You will find her very entertaining, I hope. She plays the piano. What should I do with my piano if my friends did not come and play upon it, now that my own fingers are grown too old and weak?"

"Is she—this Miss—?" I hesitated.

"Miss Van Voorhis," said my aunt.

"Is Miss Van Voorhis an invalid?"

"Oh no! But why should she not do all in her power to retain and strengthen her abilities, by rest in the exhausting heat of the day?"

Why, to be sure? I could not tell. Yet this notion of her going to bed in mid-day did not prepossess me in the lady's favour. A form passed along the hall by the open door.

"Margaret!" said Aunt Hetty.

The form paused. I suppose Aunt Hetty could see her from where she sat, but to me was only visible the edge of her dress—a neat calico.

"Are you going up to Miss Van Voorhis?"

"Yes ma'am. It is four o'clock."

"Very well. I did not think it was so late."

As the steps went up on the stairs Aunt Hetty said:

"Miss Van Voorhis's maid. She has had a trying time since she came. The maid she brought ran off and left her very suddenly to marry a cabman, whom she got acquainted with on the train, while Miss Van Voorhis was asleep. For three days the poor lady was obliged to do everything herself; for not one of my servants could officiate satisfactorily as lady's-maid. Indeed, to tell the truth, I don't think they half tried to please her. For she is not at all difficult. Then I had the chance to secure this Margaret, whom I know all about, who is of a respectable family, and she suits her exactly. Margaret tries to give satisfaction, and Miss Van Voorhis is perfectly charmed with her—says she never had so perfect a maid before."

Certainly this was the most interesting and agreeable thing I had yet heard of Miss V.; for I liked the voice of this Margaret, and should have been greatly disgusted with Miss Van Voorhis if she had not.

Nearly an hour passed, and then the lady dawned upon us in the parlour whither we had gone to receive her. I had been into society before. I had seen nice girls and beautiful women. For my life I could

not help the summing up I instantly made of Miss Van Voorhis as "an old sham"—much as I wished to gratify Aunt Hetty, and do honour to her friend and guest.

I went through my introduction, and the conversation following it (if it deserved the title of conversation), with what suavity and interest I could muster. But my heart, that had warmed and grown comfortable in the hours of pleasant talk with Aunt Hetty, sank and froze in my bosom. I began to feel like one in a night-mare dream. Could it be that Aunt Hetty, with all her good sense, called this smiling, affected female, "a fine womanly girl?"

I could not reconcile it. But Aunt Hetty was wise and sensible, and I was judging hastily at first sight. I would wait, endeavour to keep prejudice out of my mind, and look for the excellence that Aunt Hetty's good word gave proof to me must be to be found somewhere in the character of Miss Van Voorhis.

I hardly dare undertake to describe her lest I do her injustice. But a little I will say. She was very thin in the face, neck and arms, waist and ankles—all of which she found occasion to modestly display, but very plump in the chest.

She seemed to me quite remarkable in her figure. I do not remember to have ever seen a woman so put together before; it really seemed unnatural—almost a deformity. She had very fine hair and teeth. Her complexion was a decided brunette, and her eyes a rather unpleasantly sharp gray. Her hands, which were small and delicate, seemed to be continually on duty, executing graceful evolutions quite dizzying to the spectator.

What particularly displeased me, however, was the evident regard for effect that appeared in all she said or did. I was satisfied that Aunt Hetty had further betrayed her usual wisdom by telling to Miss Van Voorhis, also, the hope she cherished of our final union, and that Miss V. was quite as earnest about the matter as Aunt Hetty herself. Indeed, Aunt Hetty seemed to me to have recovered her lapse from customary good sense, and to manifest no anxiety whatever to promote tête-à-têtes and lonely rambles for her guests.

It was Miss Van Voorhis who arranged and carried out all these. But to be just, as the days passed, I did find some excellence in Miss Van Voorhis. Sometimes she seemed to forget her airs and graces, and to grow truly earnest and tender as she related incidents of her two brothers, both killed in the Russian war, in whom she seemed to have lost the greater part of what made life worth living for. There was good, true feeling under all the shams in Miss Van Voorhis's heart. I began to feel sure she had a heart, that she had adopted all those airy ways and affected graces because she had a mistaken idea that they were pleasing. No one can blame a woman for the natural desire to please. She had only mistaken the way. I began to feel at least a friendly interest in my Aunt Hetty's guest. But the thought of loving her sent a cold shiver down my spinal marrow that I could in no way overcome.

I had been walking with Miss Van Voorhis. Our talk had fallen into a confidential tone which had become quite common between us; i.e., she was confidential to me; I never felt so, or was so to her. When we reached the house Aunt Hetty received her guest in her cosy little room. I strolled out again. I knew the two would fall talking of me. I did not care. I wanted to think. The question was beginning to be a grave one in my mind, "What should be the result of my acquaintance with Miss Van Voorhis?" I had the arrogance to believe that it lay with me to decide. Whichever fate I chose would be mine, and she would acquiesce in union, or must in separation, if I chose to be cruel. But I was a soft-hearted fellow, and did not like to grieve any one. And there was Aunt Hetty to gratify, as well as Miss Van Voorhis.

I had sauntered down through the little garden patch that supplied the table with the summer vegetables. Two sunbonnets were bobbing up and down among the bean-poles. I heard voices. Margaret was helping Mary pick the beans for to-morrow's dinner. I could hear their merry chatter and laughter without catching a word to give sense to what they said. I leaned against a tree and watched the scene, and lazily listened to the music of their talk. For I liked that Margaret's voice—I had always liked it. Mary took her well-filled basket and went into the house. Margaret went to a currant bush and began eating the ripe fruit. I approached. It was shady there. The sunbonnet fell back on her neck.

"So you do garden-work for variety?" I said. The hand was raised. I looked fall into the calm, pure eyes of my railway companion.

"Margaret!" It was all I could say, but my unconsciously extended hands said more.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Lemark," she said, easily and calmly.

I am afraid I was very rude. I tossed away the fruit and caught her hands.

She did not struggle or look displeased. She only lifted her eyes to my face and said, quietly:

"Let me go."

I could no more disobey than I could fly away with her in my arms, though I would have liked to perform both of these feats.

"I thought we might meet again, but it is not quite as you expected, you see."

"It is a thousand times better, for I did not dare hope we should ever meet again by accident."

"Thank you."

"How have you kept yourself that I have not seen you before?"

"I am busy with Miss Van Voorhis, or at work for her, most of the time."

"You were never a lady's-maid before? You were not when I met you?"

"I am one now," she answered, with proud gravity; "and as such not entitled to notice from a gentleman in the family."

"As lady's-maid, no. As a woman, though, you are entitled to every honour a man may render. As I am a gentleman, I will do nothing to disturb your occupation while you keep it. As I am a man, I will hope to win the grace of your confidence and good will, that I may bring you out of it as soon as you will allow me."

It was a remarkable speech for me. I don't think I ever said anything so good before or since. I saw the faint colour flit across her cheek, and one or two dimples just peep out and then disappear. But her eyes were downcast, and she suddenly eclipsed the whole vision of her face by drawing up the sunbonnet as she said:

"I must go in."

I let her go. I watched her pass in at the side door. I had come out to think what I should do about Miss Van Voorhis, and the question was as clear as day to me now. That one sight of Margaret's face had settled it all as surely and as truly as if a voice from heaven had come to guide me. Marry Miss Van Voorhis when her maid Margaret was in sight, perhaps within my reach? I would see her in Hong Kong first! And I walked up the garden path, with my hands in my pockets and head hanging down, in one of my deepest moods of abstraction.

I found Aunt Hetty alone in the parlour. She gave me a letter that had come for me during my absence. A business call required my immediate presence in the city for a few days. I told her I must be away till Saturday.

"I want to just say one word, Harry, about Miss Van Voorhis," Aunt Hetty remarked. I was all attention.

"You are showing a great deal of regard for her."

"Well?" I interrogated, gravely.

"I think you are awakening in her a strong interest."

"I have been feeling some in her," I answered, evasively.

"I know you would not pretend, Harry. Yet I have doubted sometimes if your feeling for her was so strong and decided as hers for you."

A smile came to my lips. I was almost ready to say, "perhaps not," when Aunt Hetty continued.

"I was thinking that if you could not feel a sufficient affection for her to be to her all she might desire, it would be perhaps well to extend the period of your absence for a few days more till her visit here is ended. Then I will look for your return and the continuation of your summer vacation."

I was about to acquiesce in this plan, when a fearful thought occurred. If Miss Van Voorhis went, so would Margaret.

"No, don't let her go till I come back," I exclaimed, warmly.

"I will do just what you think right about it," said Aunt Hetty. "I am sure you are too honest and honourable a man, Harry, to trifle with the best feelings of any woman."

Saying, Aunt Hetty rose and went to her room, leaving me a prey to the bitterest feelings I ever knew. She evidently took my request for the stay of Miss Van Voorhis, as conclusive proof that I intended to marry her, whereas nothing was farther from my desires. Yet she had placed me upon my honour, and how could I disappoint her in such a matter.

I took the morning train to town, and carried the hubbub of my heart along with me. After sleeping on it, I was convinced that it was my duty, as matters stood, for me to propose to Miss Van Voorhis, and that meant to marry her, for I was fearfully sure she would accept.

"How do you get on down at Aunt Hetty's?" asked Sam, as I stepped into his warehouse that day.

"Promising matter, is it?" said Bill, who was looking over Sam's shoulder at some accounts.

"I have grown stronger and regained my appetite," I replied, rather puzzled.

"It does generally have that effect," said Sam.

Bill burst into a loud laugh and exclaimed:

"How innocent!"

Suddenly it flashed through my mind that my four brothers had planned this idea of getting me away to Aunt Hetty's to be married off to Miss Van Voorhis. I had already gathered that Miss V. had some wealth. Did they still think me a needy beggar that I should marry a rich old maid?

In an instant all my tenderness for Aunt Hetty's guest's feelings had vanished. My heart was of flinty hardness towards her. I would not be the sport of my four brothers and Aunt Hetty. I even felt almost angry with the dear old lady for joining them in their machinations.

I never before put along a piece of work as I did this which detained me in town. Friday noon saw me again walking in at Aunt Hetty's front door. I was amiable and friendly with Miss Van Voorhis, but not quite so attentive as formerly. Yet Aunt Hetty seemed pleased at my early return. The evening passed pleasantly. We retired to our rooms. Margaret was attending Miss Van Voorhis. I left my door ajar and awaited her release. At length it came, and Margaret, bearing a candle, passed along the hall toward her own room. I met her. She was too calm and self-poised to be startled. Even when I took her hands and led her away to Aunt Hetty's little room she did not tremble, but looked up when we were there, with quiet question, into my face, as I put down the candle.

I released her hands and seated her.

"Margaret, I am in trouble—in a terrible trouble—and only you can help me out of it," I said, earnestly.

"I?" she answered, gravely.

"Yes, you, only you. Because I will be helped by no one else. Margaret, I believe in you as I do in my own soul—as I do in Heaven. Can you, dare you trust and believe in me?"

"I believe that you are sincere—that you mean what you say."

"Thank you for that. I never before quite dared to marry any woman. But I can trust my very soul with you, Margaret. Can you trust me so much?"

She sat silent so long that I feared my case was lost.

At last she moved. She simply laid one hand in mine, and raised her eyes to mine. Those true and earnest eyes, grown tender now, were half-full of tears and a little tremor flickered round her lips. Then she spoke in a low, broken voice.

"You will find you have much to forgive in me."

"A thousand times more to be proud of and to thank you for," I answered, bending forward to touch her lips with mine.

The conversation that followed was more practical than sentimental. I wanted she should marry me at once. But she insisted imperatively on deferring the matter.

I believe if I had not been so urgent she would have stipulated for a full orthodox three months engagement. But I saved that vexation and she promised to get leave of Miss Van Voorhis next day and do a bit of shopping. And she promised also that she would become my wife.

My indignation against my brothers, shadowing also my Aunt Hetty, through her connivance, for the plan they had made was not yet quelled, and found vent in begging and finally securing of Margaret a promise of elopement and a secret wedding, after which we would return to Aunt Hetty's as man and wife.

She was more ingenious than I, and having once consented to that mode of marriage she quickly arranged the details.

She had an aunt that lived some ten or fifteen miles distant. We would take a carriage and ride thither. Margaret would take care to have her informed of our intentions, and banns could be put up then in readiness for our marriage. Afterwards we could return.

Nothing could have been better planned. For a week I wandered in a fairy-land, dreaming continually of the grand surprise I should give every one, and waking with sudden starts to be agreeable to Miss Van Voorhis and dutiful to Aunt Hetty. I begged my aunt to detain Miss Van Voorhis a week longer.

She looked at me fixedly and consented. But did I not catch the gleam of a cold smile on her face? Was I then losing the good opinion of Aunt Hetty by my trifling with Miss Van Voorhis? Sometimes this thought tortured me. But I would explain all by-and-bye, and surely dear, kind, good Aunt Hetty would forgive me!

So the week passed. I saw very little of Margaret.

Miss Van Voorhis kept her room much of the time, and Margaret was obliged to attend upon her. Perhaps she was indulging in extra beauty-sleeps and Margaret was on duty to keep the flies off. For Aunt Hetty had most unprecedently determined to give a party in honour of Miss Van Voorhis and myself, and had appointed it for the very Monday evening on which Margaret and I were to be married. I agreed to it with the utmost cheerfulness, and told Margaret we must return from her aunt's immediately after the ceremony, to be present at Aunt Hetty's party. There was little movement of preparation for that wonderful party till Monday came. Then only a subdued bustle, a faint hum and buzz in various rooms with closed doors, and the driving up of many waggons, and passing in and out of many men at the back door, told of an unusual movement. The parlour was closed and I did not venture to look in, being warned of Aunt Hetty that I should not, under pain of her eternal displeasure. Indeed, I felt very little curiosity or interest in the party. I regarded all preparations with a calm smile of superiority. So much greater a matter was before me and in my mind, I could only be amused by the strenuous efforts made to compass a great social success in the way of a party.

Once Margaret murmured as she passed me, "My trunk has come." And with that one second of confidence concerning our important work, the day passed away.

I never pretended to know how Margaret would manage about dressing both herself and Miss Van Voorhis.

We were to start at six. Miss Van Voorhis was to be dressed at seven. I never knew whether she was or not. But I know that the clock had scarcely struck six when I put Margaret into a close carriage at a back gate leading to my aunt's side door.

The coachman had received his directions from Margaret, to whom I had sent him in the afternoon for explanation of the road to her aunt's.

The aunt was expecting us, had sent a cordial reply and best of promises, in answer to Margaret's note of confidence.

Everything was going, too finely to be true, I thought. I scanned closely the face beside me, by the light of the coach lamps, and made talk to hear her voice, that I might be sure it was Margaret wrapped in the disguising great waterproof beside me.

There was no mistake in the voice nor in the grave face with clear, straightforward-looking eyes, the shy dimples coming and going as she talked, cheered by an unusual number of smiling blushes.

I remember once she said, looking up pleadingly in my face:

"Will you ever forgive me for this day's work, Harry?"

"I'll love you all the more dearly for it," I answered, earnestly.

She shook her head sadly.

"Harry, I should never be happy again if you did not forgive me. I feel I am doing wrong," she said, and her eyes fell and her lips trembled, "yet I hardly know when the wrong began, or—just how I could have done differently."

"You couldn't. It is all my own deed. I take the responsibility of it."

It was a long ride. We had hoped to reach our destination before eight; but our horses seemed fagged. It was nearly nine when we drew up before a large lighted house.

We had talked all the way, but I remember little of it, save what is told above, and one thing more.

"Did you know who I was when I met you in the train?" I asked.

"No," she replied. Then she added, truthfully, "But I found out before I saw you again."

"How?"

"I saw your picture in an album and inquired."

"And was that why it was so long before I saw the face of Miss Van Voorhis's maid?"

"I don't know."

Our coachman took a coachman's pride in putting his steeds to their best as we approached the house. We flew along for a few moments with astonishing speed, and then drew up suddenly before a doorway.

We were ushered at once into an apartment reserved for us on the first floor. A fine-looking lady greeted Margaret with tender officiousness and removed her cloak. I was undergoing a dizzying sensation from a sort of familiar strangeness about the room, when the burst of Margaret's loveliness as she emerged from the waterproof riveted my eyes and mind.

Mrs. Rowe then brought a wreath of orange blossoms and arranged it in Margaret's beautiful hair. Two young ladies, Mrs. Rowe's daughters, patted, and petted, and shook, and tried effects about Margaret's foamy white robes. Then she was ready.

She walked up to me, straightened my tie, and smoothed a stray lock of hair with true wifely care, but there was a grave, anxious look in her calm face that went to my heart.

"Margaret, do you repent?"

She only gave me one earnest gaze and put her gloved hand in my arm. At a beseeching look from Margaret the young ladies preceded us. Mrs. Rowe followed.

Thus we entered the church. It was one forest of flowers. I saw only so much. I was again dazzled by that sense of a familiarity in the strangeness. I was proud. It was indeed the proudest moment of my life.

Yes, for my life I could not hold up my head, and look the glad triumph that I felt. My eyes fell, then my head lowered till I raised it from very indignant shame at my own behaviour. If I was proud, I was humble too; for I knew I was receiving a treasure I little deserved. I fixed my eyes straightforward on vacancy.

The ceremony of marriage began, went on, was ended. Margaret Rowe was no longer Margaret Rowe, but my wife.

Mrs. Rowe kissed us both and wished us all manner of happiness. So did her daughters. Then—was I dreaming—Aunt Hetty and Miss Van Voorhis stood before us, doing the very same! Nor was that all! Sam and his wife came next, and he put off a joke on my being a "sly dog."

Then Tom and his wife came—Bill and his wife followed. And Dick and his consort was not wanting to make up the interesting family party. All the children came for kisses, and taking the offspring of all four of my brothers together, one sees no small slice of his posterity.

It was dizzy enough to see all these unexpected guests, but the fun they had, the jokes they showered on me, the relief all evinced in something that I quite failed to appreciate, nearly crazed me.

I grew red at first. Then as the pain of the position grew upon me, I think I turned pale. Margaret said blue lines came round my mouth and eyes, and the veins stood out on my forehead. She led me back to the house we had first entered. I saw it all now. This was Aunt Hetty's house in festal dress. I sat down and rested my head in my hand. Margaret knelt before me. She drew my head into her arms—upon her shoulder.

"Harry, Harry, what have I done? Oh, I am so sorry! If you can forgive me, I can never forgive myself!"

I think I wept. Great sobbing tears came whether I would or no. But when I looked up and saw the agony in that strong, calm, white face, I was cured of my weakness.

"Tell me how it was," I said.

And I had asked of her the hardest thing I could have asked.

"I will tell you," said Aunt Hetty. I did not know before that she was by. "I wanted you to marry Margaret. It was my idea entirely from the first. I mentioned it to your brothers that I might learn whether you had already formed any attachment that would interfere with my wish. Miss Van Voorhis arrived unexpectedly before Margaret. But when Margaret came, she quickly understood from some incautious words of mine what were my hopes. She saw, too, your picture. And it was her will to not as maid to Miss Van Voorhis and let you find her out in that position. Kind Miss Van Voorhis gladly lent herself to the scheme. But we were all abroad when you devoted yourself to her. Not one of us could think why you did so, unless you were a fortune-hunter. By that conduct you almost lost all opportunity of meeting Margaret; for while you were devoted to Miss Van Voorhis she would not let you see or speak with her."

"But I did," I cried.

"It was an accident," she said. "I did not know you were in the garden, or I should not have lingered."

"A blessed accident," I answered.

It was hard to forgive that day's delusion. To find that, when I was so sure I was outwitting them all, I had only been fulfilling everybody's wishes, would have made me hate any woman but my Margaret. To do her justice, she avowed that had she known my earlier history as she now knows it—had she known the mortification it would cause me, she would never have consented to the fraud.

It was hard to forgive it. But having once done so, I have never again had anything to forgive in my wife Margaret.

B. H.

A statement made by "A Retired Field Officer" that the 16th has never been in action is contradicted. He says that since the regiment was raised in 1688, it has taken part in the battle of Walcourt, in 1689; the battle of Steinkirk, 1692; the battle of Landen, 1693; the siege and capture of Namur,

1695; the sieges of Kaiserswerth, Venloo, Barmunde, Stevenawart and the capture of Liège, 1702; the sieges of Huy and Limburg, 1703; the victory of Schellenberg, 1704; the battle of Blenheim, 1704; the siege of Landau, 1704; forcing the lines at Helzen and Neer-Hesperen, 1705; the battle of Ramilles, 1706; the battle of Oudenarde, 1708; the siege and capture of Lille, 1708; the siege and capture of Tournay, 1709; the battle of Malplaquet, 1709; the siege and surrender of Mons, 1709; the siege of Pont-à-Vendin, Douay, Aire, St. Venant, and Bethune, 1710; the siege of Arieux, 1711; the siege of Bonchateau, 1711; the siege of Quesnoy, 1712; and the capture of the colony of Surinam, 1804. "Though the regiment," says "Another Field Officer," "was not on active service in the Peninsula or the Crimea; nor yet in any of the late campaigns, still it is a manifest injustice to say that it was never in action."

FAREWELL: A SONNET.

SADLY I leave thee, dearest, for awhile;
How long I know not—but this I know,
With heavy heart and tearful eyes I go
To yearn for thee through many a weary
mile

Of envious ocean, till thy beaming face
Fades to a memory, like a shooting star
Of yesternoon. Alas! 'tis ever far,
In Love's sad lexicon, the smallest space
Beyond the compass of out-reaching hands,
And never near—how close we are to each
True lovers be, if kisses may not reach
Across the distance. Well, since Fate com-
mands,

I go, to wander with reluctant feet,
Till once again our loving lips shall meet!

J. G. S.

FAÇETIÆ.

DIARIES FOR THE YEAR.

THE TAILOR.

January.—Moved up to London from the country with my wife and children.

February.—Obtained employment in a West End establishment, and carried favour with my master's customers.

March.—Got access to the books of the firm, and made copious extracts therefrom.

April.—Became a widower, and married my master's daughter.

May.—Explained to my father-in-law that he was completely in my power. Proved my position by referring to the extracts I had made from the journal and the ledger. My father-in-law angry, but powerless. Became his partner.

June.—Very busy with legal proceedings against the less important customers of the firm. Constant communication kept up between our solicitors and the official representatives of the Sheriffs of London and Middlesex.

July.—Enjoyed a tour on the Continent. Travelled strictly incognito under the nomme de voyage of "Baron de Smith, Grand Milor' Anglais."

August.—Back to business. Resumed legal proceedings, and called in all the debts of the firm. Reined the establishment, and divided the profits. Father-in-law retired to Clapham.

September.—Started business on my own account in the premises lately occupied by my father-in-law and myself. Invested the Royal Khiva Overcoat. Got the argument made by the machine girls for next to nothing, and advertised it largely. Spent a great part of the month in shooting over my new preserves in Sussex.

October.—Explained to the important customers of the late firm that my then partner (my father-in-law) was responsible for commencing legal proceedings against any gentleman of higher rank than a baronet. Upon this, important customers returned to my books by the score, and unimportant customers (following the lead of their betters) by the thousand.

November.—Commenced to accommodate my customers. Lent money at eighty-five per cent. to those of them who could give me proper security. Found this venture even a better thing than the sale of "the Royal Khiva Overcoat," as advertised.

December.—Financial business flourishing famously. Half-a-dozen decoys bringing me customers (each with two good names) daily. Nothing could be better. Ended the year by eating my plum-pudding off silver plate, and marrying my daughter (by my first wife) to a parson!—Punch's Almanac, 1876.

REASONABLE HINT.—The person likely to feel warmest at this time of year is the man who is not thoroughly wrapped up in himself.—Punch.

WHO, INDEED!—A friend of ours has just had a

son and heir presented to him and is in great trouble as to his sponsorial appellation. The original intention was to call him William, but the unfortunate father has put a cheque (crossed) on that. He says he should never think of the boy except as Christmas Bill—and who could love him then?—Fau.

PRISONER.—I can assure your worship that I'm innocent as an unborn babe.

COUNTRY MAGISTRATE.—Yes, I am inclined to think you are; but I shall give you three months for all that!—Judy.

KEEPING HER HAND IN.

ELDER SISTER.—Don't be so lackadaisical, Kate. It's no good moping about one who does not care for you!

KATE.—Why not? At all events it won't hurt till I find one who does.—Fau.

IN THE KEY OF THE SEA.

It is rumoured that the Duke of Edinburgh will take the command of an ironclad early in the spring. We know that H.R.H. was a patron of the Royal Academy of Music, but we were not aware that his devotion to it would induce him to run the risk of being R.A.M.'d to death!—Fau.

THE THROWN OF INDIA.

The Prince of Wales has been thrown out of his carriage and has fallen off his horse. Rumours are afloat that more money is wanted for the tour, and evidently His Royal Highness has not much of a balance left.—Fau.

PLEASANT!

Scene.—A bleak Scottish Moor. Time—New Year's Day. Train gradually stops.

EXCITED PASSENGER.—Now, then, guard, what are you stopping here for?

PHILOSOPHICAL GUARD.—Fact is, the watter's gone off the hills. However, it's just possible th' express bein' 'll be late.—Punch.

HOW TO KILL TIME.—First catch your Time—by the forelock, if possible. Then hold him tight. Then give him one for his nob, and let the one be a good one. Then knock him down. Then kick him from the rear. Then make faces at him. Then pull his nose. Then sit on his head. Then ask him if he's had enough now, or will wait till he gets it? If he don't answer you may safely conclude that you have killed him.—Judy.

UNTRUE TO HIMSELF.

He is a second-hand clothier, and holds forth in S—Street. It was about the hour of ten in the morning when he reeled into an adjoining establishment, fell into a chair, waved his hands into the tangled locks of his gray hair, and, rocking backwards and forwards, moaned out:

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear! I ish rained!"

"Vas is der matter, Jacob?" asked his sympathizing brother in the trade, bending over him.

"You remember dat coat vot I paid six pence for on yesterday?"

"Yes, I remembers him."

"Just now a man from the country comes in and asks me how much for dat, and I tells him six shillings; and would you believe it, Moses, he puts his hand right into his pocket and pays de full price without a word?"

Here he lowered his voice to the lowest whisper.

"So help me gracious, Moses, I believe he'd paid me ten shillings just the same."

"Jacob, how you vas swindle yourself?"

"Dat vas vos make me hate mine self so much as never vas."

And the old man limped back into his own establishment, and doubted all his goods at the first call.

A WESTERN farmer writes as follows to a distinguished scientific agriculturist, to whom he felt under obligations for introducing a variety of swine: "Respected sir, I went yesterday to the cattle show; I found several pigs of your species. There was a great variety of beasts; and I was very much astonished at not seeing you there."

RELATIONSHIPS are rather far-fetched sometimes both in Ireland and Scotland. "Do you know Tom Duffy, Pat?" "Know him, is it?" said Pat, "sure he's a relation of mine? he once wanted to marry my sister Kate."

A LITTLE boy told a physician that his mother believed him a "duck of a doctor;" and when asked to explain, said, "Because father thinks you a perfect quack."

"THE prisoner at the bar seems to have a very smooth face," said a spectator to the jailer. "Yes," replied the jailer, "he was ironed just before he was brought in."

IDLE CAPITAL.—A young man bought a pair of gloves the other day, who, if he lives, is evidently destined to be one of the millionaires of the next generation. He purchased a pair of dark-coloured gloves, and when they were handed to him the shopman politely inquired if he would not like a pair

of light gloves for evening wear. "No," was the reply. "I may want a pair of lavender ones at Christmas, but I won't buy them now—I can't afford to let too much capital lie idle."

"Ah!" yawned a bachelor, "this world is but a gloomy prison." "To those in solitary confinement," added a witty lady. Her name has been forgotten, but Mrs. Blank will do.

A NEW Paris telescope brings the moon to within the mists of the earth, and a lady says she could get up a conversation with some other lady there.

A GENTLEMAN in Paris paid a visit to a lady, in whose parlour he saw a portrait of a lovely woman of, say, five-and-twenty. Upon the entrance of the lady, her visitor naturally asked her if the picture was a family portrait, and was told that it represented her deceased daughter. "Has it been long since you lost her?" asked the gentleman. "Alas!" replied the lady, "she died just after her birth, and I had the portrait painted to represent her as she would appear if she had lived until now."

WHY?

Why should the autumn days be called
The saddest of the year?

To me it seems they give us glooms
Of loveliness beyond our dreams,
And in the glorious hues they spread
Beneath the foot and o'er the head,
A lesson of good cheer is read
To all who choose to hear.

What though the forest boughs grow bare?

Their leaves still clothe the sod!
These gauds they cast to fight the blast
Of winter's legions, and at last
They conquer in the seasons' ring,
And don fresh jewels with the spring—
So flowers shall bloom and birds shall sing
New hymns to Nature's God!

The gray of sky, the gloom of earth,
The weariness of rain,
The snow, the frost, are but the coat
Of Nature's triumph o'er the lost
That ever still was found anew,
And brighter, braver, better grew
From pain and peril ventured through
To life and light again!

So, say not that the autumn days

Are saddest of the year;
But learn to know that here below
Each season hath its weal and woe;
That summer's bloom is only lost
Because of winter's frosty rust,
And, of earth's changes each is best
In its appointed sphere.

C. D. G.

GEMS.

The sweetest of all pleasures, and one that will never decay, is to cherish the heart that loves you.

Those men who are of the noblest dispositions think themselves the happiest when others share their happiness with them.

ABUNDANCE is trouble—want, a misery—honour, a burden and advancement, dangerous—but competency, happiness.

NEVER overpraise any absent person, especially ladies, in the company of ladies. It is the way to bring envy and hatred upon those whom you wish well to.

We must love our friends as true amateurs love paintings, they have their eyes perpetually fixed on the finest parts, and see no others.

WOMEN, in their most exalted state, are not so difficult to win as they are sometimes imagined to be; it unfortunately happens that the best men think them the most so.

No woman, even the most intellectual, believes herself decidedly homely. This self-deception is natural, for there are some most charming women without a particle of beauty.

Do not attempt to frighten children and inferiors by passion; it does more harm to your own character than it does good to them; the same thing is better done by firmness and persuasion.

FRENCH COURTSHIP.—In France the parents of the interested ones first consider the matter of the marriage. "Look, monsieur," says mamma, "here is my daughter, and all her graces and accomplishments, and her good heart; and here, also, is the dowry I will give with her." And, here,

madame," says monsieur, who is very likely her neighbour or friend, "here is my son and his probable inheritance; his education has been what you know; his profession and talent what you know, also; as to his amiability you shall judge, for I'll give you every opportunity of observing; and, moreover, when he marries, I will give the boy—so and so." The youngsters meet, and, unless they are very difficult to suit, are obliging enough to further their parents' plan.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

FOR CHAPPED HANDS.—Mix together equal quantities of rich cream and strong vinegar, and rub it over your hand every time you wash them.

FAT RASCALS.—Three-quarters of a pound of butter, rubbed in with one pound of currants. Finger the paste lightly, roll it out thin, and cut it into small rounds. Serve these hot, split in two, and buttered inside.

TO CLEAN LOOKING GLASSES.—Take a newspaper, or part of one, according to the size of the glass. Fold it small and dip it into a basin of clean cold water; when thoroughly wet squeeze it out in your hand as you would a sponge, and then rub it hard all over the face of the glass, taking care that it is not so wet as to run down in streams. In fact, the paper must only be completely moistened or damped all through. After the glass has been well rubbed with wet paper, let it rest for a few minutes, and then go over it with a fresh, dry newspaper (folded small in your hand) till it looks clear and bright, which it will almost immediately and with no further trouble. This method, simple as it is, is the best and most expeditious for cleaning mirrors, and it will be found so on trial—giving a cleanness and polish that can be produced by no other process.

STATISTICS.

DEATH SENTENCES.—In the last ten years 214 criminals have been sentenced to death in England and Wales, but only 103, or less than half the number, were in fact executed. In the year 1874 as many as 26 were sentenced to death, and 16 of them were executed. In the 39 years 1836-74 there have been 432 criminals executed in England and Wales, or 11 a year upon an average. The largest number in that period was 22 in 1863; the smallest was four in 1871. There were 111 executions in the first ten years, and there were 103 in the last ten. If we go further back than 1836 we find very different figures in the three years 1834-35 the executions were no less than 101, averaging 34 a year. But even in those dark ages we have looked in vain for records of capital sentences passed, as an Italian contemporary states, by clerical justices of the peace.

MISCELLANEOUS.

HOSPITAL Sunday in London this year has been fixed for the 18th June.

Among the items of art gossip one may be of interest to our readers—that Lord Ronald Gower has just completed a bust of Marie Antoinette on her way to execution.

The price of London land is on the rise and rapidly, for the fee simple of No. 21, Cullum Street, Fenchurch Street, covering a superficial area of little over 280 feet, was sold the other day at 10s. per square foot.

ALL letters, papers, etc. for any of the suite or officers on special duty with His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales should be addressed, "Princes of Wales' Camp, and not to any particular post town."

In examining the papers of the late George Grote his widow has discovered a remarkable essay exhibiting the historian's opinions of Aristotle as a moral teacher. This precious paper, so interesting to the philosophical world, is printed among a group of posthumous papers which will be published in a few days.

A CITY man died rather suddenly recently. Upon the fact being communicated to a banker by a gossip, the latter asked what the deceased man had said prior. "He didn't say anything," was the reply. "That's just like him," said the banker, "he was a thorough business man, never wasted his words, nor his banker's." The gossip went.

His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught and the party of officers who accompanied him on a board-spear expedition to Morocco, in the neighbourhood of Tangier, returned to Gibraltar in his yacht "Vega" on the 9th. The expedition was most successful, twelve wild pigs being killed in two days. His Royal Highness went to Tangier on the invitation of Sir John Drummond Hay, British Minister to the Court of Morocco.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

JAMES L.—The tale will be continued at an early date.
J. B. S.—We know nothing of the standing of the firm or corporation. Write to a mercantile agency.
J. F. R.—We do not know of any firm that can furnish you with the apparatus you desire. You write a very nice hand.

VIDA.—The family name of the Duke of Portland is William J. Scott-Bentinck; his London address is 19, Cavendish Square.

BAT.—Censure of a man's own self is generally oblique praise; it is in order to show how much he can spare.

T. E. W.—Balloons are only built by or under the direction of professional aeronauts, to whom you will have to apply for information.

K.—A great man is made so for others, not for himself—to relieve the poor, comfort the afflicted, protect the oppressed, correct the vicious, and deliver the captive.

EARLY FLOWER.—Certainly you are much too young to indulge in smoking, and unless you abstain from the practice you will undoubtedly do your constitution much harm.

LOUIE G.—The hair enclosed is what is termed a golden brown of very uncommon shade. Your writing requires more freedom and ease, which practice may improve.

J. W. C.—The recommendation from your employer should merely state that while in his employ he has found you honest, capable, faithful and industrious. The briefer such documents are the better.

W. M.—When making calls send your card up by the servant. In case there is no servant in attendance, put your card into the card receiver, which you will usually find either upon the stand in the hall or the table in the drawing-room.

CIARA ASHLEY.—Since you are quite young, why not wait a year or two and see if your parents, when they find that you are firmly resolved to marry the man of your choice, will not finally give their consent to your marriage?

A. M. M.—You cannot fail to acknowledge that your lover had sufficient reasons for treating you as he did. His conduct was rather ungentlemanly, but it still it is your duty to apologize to him for so publicly disregarding his wishes.

C. A.—Your guardian cannot compel yourself or mother to give an account of how the money which is paid to you in accordance with your father's will is expended, provided your expenses do not exceed the amount they are authorised to pay from time to time.

J. A. R.—Ventriloquism cannot be learned unless you have a natural mimetic faculty. Under a teacher it might be developed. We do not know the address of such a person. 2, The 9th of September, 1855, came on Sunday.

WRITER.—We would be glad to inform you and all other unemployed persons where and how to obtain situations, were such a thing possible. Without persist at application at places where work such as you are capable of doing is performed you cannot obtain it, and while the demand for help is so limited as at present in many cases that fails.

C. A. C.—If the young lady refuses to bring the correspondence to a close at your request there is no way in which you can compel her to do so, and the only alternative is to leave the field to your rival, if you regard him in that light.

MOON WATCHMAN.—1. The distance from the earth to the moon is 240,000 miles. 2. The eight primary members of the solar system, usually called planets, are Mercury, Venus, the Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune. Some astronomers also include the moon, which is a satellite of the earth, and others also include the asteroids, or minor planets.

SALLIE.—We, too, know people who are most lavish with their advice. They will tell us our duty is to attend the fair and charitable institutions, to contribute to our utmost ability to the suffering poor, while they will not give for charity. You know best what you are able to do for the poor, and need not be annoyed by what such people say to you, but treat them politely. Courtesy is always to be cultivated.

TILLEY.—1. As a lady has given her services for nothing, we think the least the congregation can do is to make her a nice present. A very nice sum could be raised by each member contributing a small amount, which might be expended for some useful article, or the cash placed in a purse or portmanteau purchased for the purpose. The pastor of the church should be requested to make the presentation in the name of the

congregation. 1. It is not necessary that the names of the donors should appear, unless it should be gotten up by a few friends. If all are allowed or invited to contribute, it should be done in the name of the congregation.

BONES.—1. Blotting paper is made in the same manner as other kinds of paper, its absorbent qualities being the result of an admixture of woollen rags with the other material of which the pulp is composed. 2. Paper makers remove printing ink stains from the waste paper which is to be converted into pulp for new paper by boiling it in soda, which unites with the oil in the ink, and the colour subsides.

HOUSEHOLD WORDS.—"Judson's Dyes" have now become "household words" with the thrifty. Their usefulness and efficiency are established beyond question, not only by the testimony of those who have proved their value but by the rapidly-increasing demand for them, which must severely tax the energies of the manufacturers. We think they would answer your purpose admirably, inasmuch as almost every conceivable material may be treated with them successfully. Our advice is "Try them."

A. B. C.—1. A ceremonious ball or dancing party does not often assemble before half-past nine or ten o'clock, and written or printed notes of invitation are always sent out, often three weeks before the specified time. 2. At private dances a lady must not decline the invitation of a gentleman to dance unless she is previously engaged or does not intend to dance any more during the evening. To do otherwise would be a tacit reflection upon the master and mistress of the house. 3. Introductions at such places can, if desired, cease with the occasion. 4. When the dance is finished the gentleman offers his arm to his partner and leads her to a seat beside her friends or promenades through the room until the music for the next dance sounds and her partner comes for her.

A QUESTION ANSWERED.

Once in my wilderness of life there bloomed
 A royal flower. Moss: perfect in formation,
 Rich in its colouring, while with its fragrance
 The atmosphere about me was perfumed.

I idolized that flower! It was my king!
 In worship bowed my very soul before it.
 It gave me thought for thought and blush for blush.

And I brought all my life could give to bring.

Was it not strange that my grand flower should die?

One fairer came, and then the father plant

Transplanted in a richer parterre, thrived—

I mourned and wept when others were not nigh.

And near my heart I cherished that dead flower;

To-day I shook the brown, serene leaves apart,

And found therein a perfect living seed.

Ready to burst and grow within the hour.

Shall I that seed destroy or let it live?

I have so missed my royal passion flower;

Shall I forget that once 'twas dead to me,

And say take all that Love and I can give?

Yes—once I surely missed that flower, and yet

You know hearts oft are caught in the rebound.

And I a true and loyal love have found,

And can recall past days without regret.

L. R.—1. From what you write we should judge the young man cares for you, and his reason for not wishing to become engaged appears a very sensible one. We should advise you to wait until he has finished his studies and established himself in his profession. Then, if you are both of the same opinion as you are now, you can marry. There need not be an engagement in the meantime. If your affections are sincere an engagement is not essential to keep you constant. 2. It may seem hard to commence to earn one's own livelihood after having lived in idleness, but we trust you will not allow your misfortune to sour your disposition and make you gloomy and sad. Whatever business you engage in, make up your mind to carry all the sunshine possible into it.

BEX, nineteen, medium height, dark hair and eyes, wishes to correspond with a thoroughly domesticated young lady.

MIRIAM, seventeen, rather short, light brown hair and eyes, would like to correspond with a respectable young gentleman.

RED LEAD JACK, a Royal Marine, twenty-four, 5ft. 7in., dark complexion, wishes to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony.

VIOLET and **PRIMROSE** wish to correspond with two young men, good looking and good tempered. Violet is twenty, blue eyes, brown hair and domesticated; Primrose is nineteen, medium height, dark eyes and hair and fond of singing.

BELLA, forty, a widow, wish to correspond with a working man with a view to matrimony. Bella has a good temper, is rather tall, a good housekeeper, very domesticated, and would make a good mother to children.

T. H., a young man in the Royal Marines, who is shortly about to leave the service and wishes to settle down, twenty-three, 5ft. 8in., dark complexion, early black hair, is considered good looking and of a loving disposition, has lately had a small fortune left him, wishes to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony.

PAGIN, a respectable young man, with good prospects, nineteen, tall, and considered good looking, wishes to correspond with a young lady about seventeen with a view to matrimony.

F. B., medium height, dark brown hair and eyes, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young gentleman about twenty-four, who must be dark, fond of home, and in a good position.

A. B., twenty-four, rather tall, dark hair and eyes, and with 100l. per annum, would like to correspond with a

young gentleman about her own age, tall and dark, and who must be affectionate and fond of home.

H. B., twenty, tall and fair, with a good income, would like to correspond with a young gentleman about twenty-four, who must be dark, loving, and fond of home.

PAULINE D., eighteen, a handsome brunette, would like to correspond with a tall, handsome gentleman, not more than twenty-seven, with a view to matrimony; an officer in the army preferred; money no object as she has more than sufficient for both.

EMMA and **BLANCHET**, two friends, wish to correspond with two friends or brothers. Emma is seventeen, tall, fair, and blue eyes; Blanche is nineteen, medium height, fair, blue eyes, and both considered pretty. Respondents must be tall, dark, good looking, loving, and fond of home.

WOOLMAN, twenty, medium height, wishes to correspond with a young lady about seventeen or eighteen, with a view to matrimony.

PAUL, a steward in the Royal Navy, 5ft. 7in., fond of music and children, and considered very good looking, would like to correspond with a young lady from seventeen to twenty, who must be loving and fond of home and children, with a view to matrimony; a milliner preferred.

BARRETT, nineteen, fair complexion, dark brown hair, gray eyes, medium height, lively disposition and considered pretty by all her friends, wishes to correspond with a dark young gentleman about twenty; a clerk preferred.

M. W., medium height, fair complexion, of a loving disposition, wishes to correspond with a tall, dark gentleman who is fond of home.

MARGARET, twenty-three, medium height, good looking, dark brown hair and eyes, good tempered, would like to correspond with a respectable young man about twenty-seven.

ANNIE, rather short, dark hair and eyes, of a loving disposition, wishes to correspond with a young man, fond of home, with a view to matrimony.

LORETTA ALICE, eighteen, medium height, light brown hair and eyes, loving disposition, wishes to correspond with a respectable young man; a clerk in a trade preferred.

FANNY, nineteen, good looking and affectionate, wishes to correspond with a respectable young man about twenty.

FRED L., eighteen, medium height, light hair and blue eyes, fair complexion, and thoroughly domesticated, wishes to correspond with an amiable and affectionate young lady with a view to matrimony; respondent must be about seventeen, good tempered, and have a little money.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

SCARLETT is responded to by—Polly G., who is nineteen, fair, considered good looking, thoroughly domesticated and fond of home.

REU OF THE DAY by—N. F. R., who is between nineteen and twenty, of a very loving disposition, and fond of home.

WASH DECK by—Ethel, twenty-one, respectfully connected, domesticated, a good housewife, and thinks she would suit him.

NORODY'S DARING by—Willie, nineteen, rather tall, good looking, and in a very respectable profession.

WILLIAM by—Polly, twenty-two, 5ft., very good looking, rather fair, very domesticated, accomplished, and fond of home.

GEORGE B. by—C. L., who is a lady-like girl, twenty-three, with black hair, dark hazel eyes, of a loving disposition and would make him a good wife; and by—Louise, twenty-four, a little dark with fresh colour, abundance of dark curls, dark eyebrows, considered very pretty, with a fond and loving heart, thoroughly domesticated, and will make a good wife.

GUYVER by—H. L., who is a widow, thoroughly domesticated, with no family, and would make a loving and faithful wife; by—E. M., a widow, thirty-five, of a cheerful disposition, business-like habits, with an income of 100l. per annum derived from house property, and would do her best to make him a loving and dutiful wife; and by—Eunice S., twenty-nine, of a loving, cheerful disposition, and thoroughly domesticated.

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